THE

[Henry Seymour Conway]

MILITARY ARGUMENTS,

IN THE

LETTER

TO A

Right Honourable AUTHOR,

FULLY CONSIDERED,

By an OFFICER.

LONDON:

Printed for JACOB ROBINSON, at the *Golden Lyon* in *Ludgate Street*. M,DCC,LVIII.

(Price One Shilling)

Military Arguments, &c. considered.

I THOUGHT I had done reading and almoſt thinking on the ſubject of the late Expedition, when the letter *to a ſuppoſed Right Honourable Author* fell into my hands: the novelty of ſeeing a difficult military queſtion *fully ſtated and conſidered by a Country Gentleman*, revived my curioſity; but I ſoon found, by the ſmartneſs of the ſtyle, and the fallacious ſubtlety of the argument, that it was rather the work of ſome eleve of the courts, now perhaps acting as a ſort of ſecond or third rate Miniſter; and that there was as much reality in the character of the author as of the perſon addreſſed to; and as much truth in both as in many of the poſitive aſſertions contained in it.

I could not however lay it aſide: What at firſt was mere curioſity, turned into aſtoniſhment at the uncommon malignity and falſhood of this work. And though I felt as little care or intereſt as poſſible from what quarter it came, I felt too much for the characters of the gentlemen ſo ſhamefully calumniated, to let the world be any longer impoſed upon by that heap of falſe facts, falſe reaſonings, and falſe conſtructions, that are the chief ingredients of this curious compoſition: not that I intend to follow the author through all that medley of party, political, miniſterial, and naval conſiderations, with which his piece is en-

riched: But as I write neither for, or againſt any party, or any perſon that either *is* or *has been a Miniſter*, ſhall content myſelf with treating this matter in its proper light, as a military ſubject only; by ſtating facts as they paſt, with all the plainneſs and firmneſs of a ſoldier and a friend to truth, and without conſidering whom I may pleaſe or diſpleaſe.

I have from the firſt obſerved all the tranſactions of this extraordinary enterprize with attention. I have endeavoured to obtain the beſt information I could, of every material circumſtance relative to it; and though I wiſh well to the gentlemen who had the conduct of this Expedition (ſo far I will own *my prejudice* too) I am not ſurprized at the ill temper ſhewn by our people in general on its failure. I do not even condemn it, they have had diſappointments enough to ſour them: the ſervice propoſed was important; the idea of it was dazzling; they had been taught to expect ſucceſs from all the meaſures of the Miniſter who has declared himſelf the author of this; and I only wiſh, and very ſincerely wiſh, this may be their laſt diſappointment.

But though I can forgive their prejudices, I cannot look with leſs horror at the ſhameful arts uſed to foment them; nor can I humour them at the expence of truth, or of thoſe characters which, to the beſt of my judgment, have been moſt wickedly and unjuſtly aſperſed.

I ſhall not however enter into the detail of all the little motives I think I ſee operating upon this occaſion; and as it is by facts, and not by words, I mean to vindicate thoſe characters, I ſhall directly enter into the conſideration of them, and leave to thoſe who have more leiſure or inclination the management of ſuch controverſies, as rather tend

to

to encreaſe, than allay, thoſe heats which I moſt heartily lament.

I ſhall therefore from this moment no longer conſider by whom this project was framed, by whom it was approved, or diſapproved, or *to whom it was communicated.*

The author's example has given me ſufficient diſtate to ſuch conſiderations; as I think there cannot be a ſtronger inſtance of diſingnuity and malevolence than in his reflexions on that head, particularly in the following one: Pag. 8. "That "a plan approved and recommended by his R. "H. the Duke would not have ſo ſhamefully "failed without any attempt to execute it."— By which a ſet of gentlemen of diſtinguiſhed loyalty and affection to his Majeſty and this government, and even by a ſort of implication the great perſon himſelf whoſe name is ſo wantonly and ſo indecently introduced, are charged, without the leaſt colour of fact or reaſon, as traitors and enemies to their country: for what is inſinuated, is too plain to need a comment. The intereſt and honour of this nation, we are to underſtand, were ſacrificed by theſe gentlemen, in order to gratify the reſentment of a great perſon, *who had not been conſulted*; their own honour was not leſs abandoned, and all this even before they could poſſibly know how gratefully this unnatural ſacrifice would be accepted!

But let the author recollect that he *has owned himſelf prejudiced*, p. 9. And let him in his cooler hours, when they return, reflect with horror upon the effect of that prejudice which carries him thus to give up all truth, honeſty, and even that common ſenſe he ſo often appeals to, in his unjuſt repreſentations of men and things.—To theſe reflexions I ſhall leave him, as I think to ſtate this

calumny is to confute it; and have to a good an opinion of my countrymen to imagine I need even warn them not to be abuſed by ſo groſs an attempt to impoſe on their underſtandings. From this earneſt too I would have them convinced in what ſpirit this piece is compoſed, and what ingenuity, candor, and veracity, are to be expected from the proſecution of the work.

I had no thoughts of attacking the board of Enquiry, I have none now of caſting any reflexion upon the individuals who compoſed it, or of diſputing with the author their acknowledged merit; but as he very artfully undertakes its defence, that he may the more freely ſpit out his venom under the ſanction of its report, I ſhall freely, but yet very candidly, give my opinion on the conſtitution of that board, not only as it regards the cauſe of the General Officers in queſtion, but as a matter in which I really think that of the whole army eſſentially intereſted.

For as this board differed in its conſtitution, powers, and method of proceeding, from every other of the kind that I believe was ever yet eſtabliſhed; ſo I cannot but think it the moſt irregular in its form, the moſt dangerous in its nature, and the moſt contrary to all the known and ſettled rules of juſtice; a court (if ſo it might be called) which without a formal power to condemn and unable ſufficiently to acquit, could paſs a ſentence little leſs than capital, by taking away the character of officers under circumſtances, where both the civil and military laws of their country would give them protection.

A court conſtituted of perſons choſen by the Crown, or its Miniſters, without any regular rotation in the ſervice; from whence alone it is eaſy to gueſs what uſe might be made of it on occaſion:

ſuppoſe

ſuppoſe a Commander were obnoxious to a Miniſter; ſuppoſe him connected with thoſe of an oppoſite party; ſuppoſe the honour of a Miniſter and his ſchemes depended upon the condemnation of the Officer who had not executed them. I am, however, far from inſinuating this was the caſe at preſent, and do really think the rank and character of thoſe made choice of much above ſuch a ſuſpicion. To ſpeak *ad hominem* too, as the author ſays, and in the phraſe of party (though it is a language *I do not delight to talk)* I think their *connexions* do in general by no means favour ſuch a ſuſpicion; but I repreſent againſt a precedent *(whoever began it)* which, if followed, will, I think, in worſe times prove ruinous to the army and its liberty; and how nearly an enſlaved army is generally the forerunner of an enſlaved people, I need not remark.

The manner of proceeding without any charge given, or any indictment laid; the public invitation *for all perſons that pleaſed to come and bring accuſation*, for which a ſort of proclamation was made by the Judge Advocate; the public examination of the ſame witneſſes on their parole, who were afterwards to be examined on oath in the ſame cauſe: all theſe were not leſs contrary to the eſtabliſhed courſe of juſtice than the arbitrary appointment of the judges.

The very ſmall number of thoſe appointed muſt alſo be in its nature extremely liable to objection. There muſt be thirteen Judges to take away an Officer's commiſſion; he may be deprived of his character by three: which in the preſent caſe, were it not for the conſideration and figure of the perſons themſelves, I ſhould ſay was ſcarce decent, as *three* gentlemen only were to conſider and have in effect paſt a very ſevere judgment on the opinion

of *eight* given in a General Council of War on the ſpot: of thoſe eight it may be obſerved, without offence, that four were in another branch of the ſervice, high and reſpected in it, and three more were in military rank equal, and in ſervice and experience certainly not inferior to their Judges; had not been leſs in action, had not diſtinguiſhed themſelves leſs, and have in the courſe of that ſervice never had any imputation thrown on their conduct.

I do not, however, mean to lay any blame on the intentions of this board. I do think I have a right to appeal from their deciſion; eſpecially ſince the determination of another more regular, more ſolemn, and more legal court.

Having ſaid thus much of the eſtabliſhment of this board; I cannot but remark one inſtance among many of the candor and veracity of our author in the reaſon given p. 13. as a principal one for eſtabliſhing this enquiry, which is as follows:

" But if ever ſuch an Enquiry was right and " proper, it was ſo in the preſent caſe, *where the* " *parties to be tried had agreed upon a total ſup-* " *preſſion of evidence.* For in the very Council of " War *which unanimouſly reſolved to do nothing*, far " from a deſire to ſtate the evidence on which " they proceeded, and their reſpective opinions " upon that evidence, which one would think na- " tural for every one who was ſollicitous for his " honour and juſtification, *the firſt thing reſolved* " *on was to take no minutes of opinions*, and *that* " *even the informations of the perſons examined* " *ſhould not ſtand part of the minutes ſo as to be* " *tranſmitted to any perſon:* Enq. p. 10.—*Here* " *then, as far as in them lay, was a total ſuppreſſion* " *of evidence.*"

Will

Will the reader now believe me when I say, there is not a single word of truth in this whole paragraph, nor in any one of the assertions contained in it? or will he convince himself by looking into the *Enq. p.* 10. referred to by the author, and into the *Appendix, p.* 104?—In the former he will find that all the evidence there stated on the rejecting of minutes relates *to the second*, and not to the *first Council of War*; not *to that council which*, as the author tells us, *Unanimously resolved to do nothing*, but to that *which unanimously resolved to land.* In the latter, *Enq. p.* 104. he will find the first Council of War at length, containing in the body of it *those very minutes, evidence, and informations*, which the author positively tells us *were suppressed.*

But he will say, it was only an *innocent mistake* of one Council of War for the other: a *slight inaccuracy* to be sure, when the failure of the Expedition is in a manner laid upon the resolution of that very Council of War, and when eight gentlemen of rank and character are accused as *neglectful of their honour*, and as being *suppressors of truth and evidence*, which the author will allow with me is the next shame to that of being *an asserter of falsehoods.*

He next accuses one of the Generals for advancing so strange a doctrine as, that he did not conceive himself answerable for an opinion given at a Council of War: and says, *He is sorry to find this doctrine so much received among officers* (p. 13.) and afterwards, *God forbid that such a doctrine should be established!* &c. Yet does he himself do that doctrine the honour to countenance it, where he says, p. 13. That *criminally responsible for his opinion no officer can be.* So far, I believe, that point is quite agreed; *criminally responsible* is the

the very thing inſiſted upon, the very term uſed by one of the General Officers, *Enq. p.* 36. and all that, I believe, any officer is deſirous to eſtabliſh; for as to his *Majeſty's power of judging who are fit to continue in his ſervice*, into which the author ſeems at laſt to reſolve his propoſition, it was never diſputed upon this or any other occaſion; though to ſtrip a gentleman of his commiſſion for an opinion given where he was bound by his duty as a ſoldier to attend and give it, would be an exerciſe of prerogative not of the moſt humane or juſtifiable kind: it is poſſible his Majeſty may have been adviſed, not long ago, to ſuch an exerciſe of it.

For as the Crown has certainly the power, as the author ſays, though perhaps not the right, to puniſh men for their opinions; ſo have miniſters the power, the author may poſſibly think they have the right too, if it ſuits their purpoſe, to miſrepreſent the conduct of his Majeſty's moſt faithful ſervants to their ſovereign, who is more to be pitied than blamed, if he acts in conſequence of ſuch repreſentation.

I now come to thoſe preliminaries which the author ſettles as the ground-work on which his approbation of the plan, and his cenſure on the non-execution of it, ſeem principally to reſt; the firſt regards the intelligence relative to the defenceleſs ſtate of the coaſt, and the ſmall number of troops ſtationed there.

In reſpect to which I muſt be fair enough to own, I have not ſeen any good accounts of the regular troops of *France* that ſtate them ſo high as the *Dutch* liſts make them; nor can I, on the other hand, by any means agree with the author in his opinion of the accuracy of that memorial of the troops of *France* laid before the board of Enquiry, p. 69. of which he ſpeaks with ſuch confidence; much

leſs

leſs in his concluſion drawn from it of the defenceleſs ſtate of *Rochfort*.

To me it appears ſo very imperfect, ſo full of gueſſes and ſuppoſitions, and at laſt leaves ſo many men (no leſs than 77,000) unaccounted for, that I am quite at a loſs how to draw any concluſion at all from it in the preſent queſtion; as, inſtead of a vague ſuppoſition, the greateſt preciſion ſeemed neceſſary in eſtimating a garriſon to be attacked by eſcalade, or ſurprize, with a body 7 or 8,000 men only; and where of courſe the difference of 2 or 3000 might be fatal to the expedition.

But as that Memorial is thus become one of the chief baes of this accuſation, I ſhall think ſome minutes not ill employed in a more particular conſideration of it.

It ſtates as follows: That the regular troops in the pay of *France*, now conſiſt of about 200,000 men: *viz.*

Before the preſent troubles	—	157,347
Augmentations ſince	——	38,420
		195,767
Or reckoning two regiments raiſed in the biſhoprick of *Liege*, about	—	200,000

That of theſe 160,000 are employed in different ſervices out of the kingdom, or for guarding the coaſt along the *Mediterranean*, *&c.* So that for the garriſons, *&c.* in the other parts of *France*, there remain only 40,000.

It farther ſets forth, that of theſe 40,000, *about* 20,000 *are reckoned* to be from *St. Valleri* to *Berg*; and that there *is reaſon to think*, there cannot be above 10,000 from *St. Valleri* to *Bourdeaux*.

The whole of which reaſoning amounts to this: That if the calculations there made are all juſt, and

and all the *suppositions* exactly true; then it is *probable* there were not at the time the late Expedition was resolved upon above 10,000 men from *St. Valleri* in *Normandy* to *Bourdeaux*, exclusive of any proportion of the invalids, militia, *&c.* which amount by that Memorandum to no less than 67,000; besides which there also remain another 10,000 men out of the 40,000 not particularly disposed of; so that the whole number of men, of whose cantooning there is no particular account or supposition, is 87,000; including those between *St. Valleri* and *Bourdeaux*.

Thus it stands upon the footing of that account. From whence a conclusion is drawn, that *Rochefort must be* left without a garrison sufficient to defend it against *a coup de main*, or escalade, as there were but 87,000 men, at whose destination the Ministry could not particularly guess.

But as it is fit such accounts should be exact where the difference of 2 or 3000 men must be fatal to the success of an expedition; I think it will not be improper to give the several articles of the Memorandum a little farther examination.

The 1st article is, "*Minorca*, *Corsica*, "and the *American* colonies, take up at "least — — — — 25,000

But of these there is no particular state; so that it is rather a guess than an account.

"Marshal *d'Estree's* army, if the regi- "ments were compleat, would amount "to *about (iroit, à)* 92,000

"Embarked last spring for various "services in the two *Indies*, *about* 3,000 *or* 4,000

If it was really that number, or *about* it, it may be asked whether these men so sent were all of the regular troops, whether

battalions

battalions or companies, or whether only drafts or recruits. Neither of which latter, being ſent in the ſpring, would diminiſh the number of troops, as their place would certainly be ſupplied.

" For guarding the places and poſts " along the *Mediterranean* coaſt, *about* 6,000 *or* 7,000

" It is reckoned that there are from " *St. Valleri* to *Berg*, *about* — 20,000

And laſtly, " That *there is reaſon to believe* that there cannot be from *St. Valleri* to *Bourdeaux* above — — 10,000

What that reaſon is, does not, I think, ſo plainly appear.

Now, as every one of the above articles are plainly nothing more than *gueſſes* at the number of men mentioned in them, it is natural to imagine, that a few thouſand may eaſily be miſtaken amidſt ſo many ſuppoſitions, and in ſo large a number as 160,000 or 180,000; and conſequently that the garriſon of *Rochefort*, or ſtate of the troops near it, cannot be determined by ſuch an account.

But I have hitherto conſidered this matter upon the calculations of the Memorial only.

The true ſtate of the *French* Army *at the Beginning of the preſent troubles*, from the ordonances of the King, ſettling the eſtabliſhments after the the peace of *Aix*, and from the beſt calculations and authorities, I take to be as follows:

	Numb. of men.
French guards, ſix battalions - -	4,328
viz. Each battalion has five companies of fuſiliers, of 126 each	3,780

Three

Brought over —		3,780	4,328
Three companies of grenadiers to the whole, of 110 each -		338	
Officers - -		212	
		4,328	
Swiſs guards, four battalions —			2,400
viz. Each battalion has three companies of 200 each, officers included —		600	
Tot. four battalions —		2,400	
French infantry, as ſettled by ordonance the 10th *Feb.* 1749, 168 battallions -			93,392
viz. 12 regiments of 4 battalions, officers included, 2,220 each —		26,640	
52 regiments of 2 battalions, 112 each —		57,824	
16 regiments of 1 battalion, 558 each — —		8,928	
		93,392	
Grenadiers *de France*, 4 batalions —			2,338
Conſiſting of 12 companies in each battallion — —			
Tot. regim. 1 Inſpect. Comm. 16 Colon. 8 Lieut. Col. 1 Major, 4 Adjud. 48 Captains, 48 Lieut. 48 ſecond Lieut. 96 Serjeants, 144 Corporals, 144 Anſpeſſades, 1728 Grenad. and 48 Drummers, Total —		2,338	
Royal regiment of artillery, 5 battalions — —			4371

Brought over			106,829
viz. Each battalion 10 companies of 72 — —		720	
Total 5 battalions		3600	
Miners and workmen		506	
Officers —		251	
		4371	
19 *German* battalions — —			12,201
Each batt. at 600 —		11,400	
Tot. officers in 19 battalions		801	
		12,201	
9 *Swiſs* regim. of 3 battalions each, =27 battalions			12,978
viz. Each battalion has 4 comp. of 120.=480 per battal. officers included.			
Tot. 27 battalions — —		12,960	
Etat Major, *&c.* — —		18	
		12,978	
Six *Iriſh* battalions of 496 each, officers included —			2,976
Two *Scotch* battalions at ditto —			992
Two *Italian* battalions at 557 each, officers included —			1,114
Total infantry —			137,090
Houſhold cavalry, including the gendarmerie —		3414	
French cavalry, 121 ſquadrons, 4 troops each —		14,872	
Foreign ditto, 8 ſquadrons		1056	
Total cavalry			19,342

Brought over		156,332
Dragoons, 16 regiments of 12 troops each —	8,852	
Huſſars, 8 ſquadrons —	918	
Light troops (as in the memorandum) — —	2158	
		11,928
		168,360
Total troops in the memorandum, —		157,347
Difference		11,003

By this it appears there is a miſtake in the memorandum of 11,003 men; which being added to the Number of regular troops allowed by that account to remain in *France*, the whole remaining there will then be as follows:

On the *Mediterranean* coaſt *about*	7,000	
Between *Bergue* and *St. Valleri*, *about* — —	20,000	
Between *St. Valleri* and *Bourdeaux*, *about* — —	10,000	
Not particularly diſpoſed of	10,000	
Omitted in the account as above	11,003	
Total		58,003

To theſe are to be added 145 companies of Invalids doing duty, which amount to	9,015	
3 companies of guards omitted	282	
Marines, as in time of peace, 100 companies of 52 each —	5,200	
1 *Swiſs* regiment ditto	950	
		3 com-

Brought over	—	58,003
3 companies of bombardiers at the maritime places	159	
107 battalions of militia at 520, officers included	55,640	
		71,246
Total		129,249

These are exclusive of the companies of cadets, of all the invalids not regimented, of the Marechaussées, and many others, armed, and on the military establishment, amounting to seven or eight thousand men, and also of the *Militia Garde-côtes*, which are a distinct body from the 107 battalions of militia before mentioned.

These are very numerous, reckoned at 150 or 200,000 men; they are composed of both horse and foot, and have their officers appointed by commissions from the king; they were particularly instituted for the guard of the coast, and often encamped for that purpose, during the last war.

But I will call the whole of these troops 50,000, which added to the 129,162 before mentioned, makes 179,162. From which, if you deduct those suppos'd to be stationed as in the memorandum, *viz.* on the *Mediterranean* 7000, between *Bergues* and *St. Valleri* 20,000, in all 27,000.

There then remain 152,162 men, of whom the memorial has not even supposed any distribution, all or any part of whom, (for ought that appears in that paper) might be stationed at or near *Rochefort*, for its defence. But that out of 152,162 men, there cou'd not be assembled in a few days 2 or 3000 for its defence against *a Coup de Main*, to be attempted by 7 or 8000 only, requires an extraordinary degree of penetration to discover; yet such was the conclusion then drawn, and now in-

ſiſted on as an unexceptionable foundation for this expedition.

I do not pretend to have any accurate account of the augmentations made ſince the commencement of the preſent troubles; and therefore take them upon the footing of the memorial, tho', as far as ſome private advices go, I have reaſon to think they are conſiderably higher than is there ſtated.

As to the arguments drawn from ſubſequent accounts of the troops on the coaſt, the march of the *French* guards, the tears of marſh. *Seneterre*, and an heap of ſuch *Pontneuf Intelligence*; they are ſo full of abſurdity in themſelves, and ſo totally contradicted by other accounts of at leaſt equal authority, that it is impoſſible to lay any ſtreſs upon them:—If one maſter of a ſhip has ſaid there were but four battalions in the neighbourhood, and but two in the town of *Rochefort*; another has ſaid, and was ready to have depoſed in form, (if ſuch evidence cou'd have been admitted) that at the very time our expedition was ſent, there were ten or twelve thouſand of the beſt troops of *France* in thoſe very parts: Others have, ſince the affair was over, given accounts to the ſame effect; as to Marſhal *Seneterre's* crying, it is impoſſible to treat it ſeriouſly, and probably is about as true, that he wept at the approach of our Armada, as that a great miniſter *Broke his heart on its return.* If one cou'd be ſerious about it, I have ſeriouſly heard an account diametrically oppoſite of that gentleman's character and behaviour on this occaſion: he ſerved, as I am well informed, throughout the laſt war with reputation both in *Flanders* and *Germany*, had a remarkable vivacity of diſpoſition; and, as I am told by a gentleman who was perſonally acquainted with him, is the laſt man *in France* he ſhou'd think capable of crying on ſuch an occaſion.

I have alſo myſelf ſeen a letter from one of his M—'s miniſters at a foreign court, which ſays, that, by his accounts from *Paris*, at the time when marſhal *Seneterre's* firſt letters came there, he wrote to his court *in the greateſt ſpirits*, ſaid he had *troops enough for the defence of* Rochefort, and *that he would anſwer for the ſafety of the place with his head.*

As to the houſhold troops, I can only ſay, that tho' it is poſſible ſuch a meaſure may have been taken for the general ſecurity of ſo long a range of coaſt; yet I believe even the author will agree, it is *impoſſible* they ſhould have ſet out on a march of 14 or 16 days from *Paris* to ſave *Rochefort* from a *Coup de Main*, which muſt have been decided in almoſt as few hours. If they were therefore really alarm'd for *Rochefort*, as is pretended, it was becauſe they knew, what is on all hands acknowledged, that *Rochefort* is from its conſtruction as weak againſt a regular attack, as I think it muſt be ſtrong and defencible againſt a mere aſſault on the ſhorteſt preparation; it was becauſe they expected *a ſiege*, and did not conceive it poſſible, that our miniſtry ſhou'd ſend out a grand armament 100 leagues to *ſurprize a town in the bottom of the bay of Biſcay.*

I ſhou'd therefore not be at all ſhaken in my opinion, as to the ſucceſs of our *Eſcalade*, even on admiſſion of all the wildeſt ſtories we have heard on this head. I will ſuppoſe the houſhold troops march'd; I will ſuppoſe the marſhal cried, if you pleaſe; I will ſuppoſe there were but two battalions collected in *Rochefort*, after a long alarm on the coaſt, and 8 or 9 days certain notice from the actual appearance of our army there; and yet I will maintain, that with thoſe two battalions, with the great number of dockmen in the yards, a vigorous

and hardy race of men; with the marines, ſome of whom are conſtantly ſtationed there; with the numerous inhabitants of the place, always uſed to arms, and garriſon duty; with a company of cadets, and another of bombardiers; and with the crews of the ſhips then in the river, which alone, if compleat, amounted to near 3,000 men; I will maintain, I ſay, that unleſs the whole were infected with the marſhal's imaginary tears, there was a garriſon much more than ſufficient to make the place perfectly ſecure againſt *ſuch an attack.*

But, after all, this ſubſequent intelligence is little to our purpoſe, as the conduct of the officers on the late expedition can certainly not be determined by any circumſtances that were not before them: no court of juſtice wou'd admit of ſuch evidence; and I think the ſame tenderneſs and ſtrict equity ought to be uſed in the trial of mens characters as of their perſons. — This the author himſelf has diſcover'd at laſt, tho' not till the very poſtſcript of his work; where, after his invention, prejudice, and invective, had enjoyed their full ſcope thro' 67 pages; after telling us of the *Reports* of 4,000 men only ſtationed from *Port l'Orient* to *Bourdeaux*, of marſhal *Seneterre's paſſing his hours in tears*, &c. he is ſeiz'd with a ſudden fit of candor, and tells us with a noble air of generous triumph, that *he ſcorn'd to avail himſelf of the intelligence lately brought from Rochelle, by a maſter of a tranſport, that he diſdained to prejudice the mind of the reader by a teſtimony of this ſort, and that he determined the conduct of the generals ſhou'd be judged of from the ſame evidence, on which they may be ſuppoſed to act, but as an opinion is by that time form'd,* (which our candid country gentleman has indeed taken due pains to form) he thinks he may as well give the *Coup de Grace*, and *from an exceſs of candor*, keeps

this

this ſtory in reſerve to leave a favourable impreſſion on the mind of the reader.

In regard to the term of *Coup de Main*, and the interpretation to be given it, it is a diſpute for grammarians, and not for ſoldiers. In fact, I do maintain, that both in the nature and intention of this enterprize, *Surprize* was the plan of it; the refuſal of a few more battalions, and a proper artillery to force the place; the refuſal to attempt getting newer or better intelligence of it, for fear of *diſcovering the ſecret*, tho' it lay venting itſelf for ſix weeks together, during the delay of the troops at the iſle of *Wight*; and more ſtill, the nature of the attack (in the view of a mere aſſault) which made ſurprize *neceſſary* to its ſucceſs; all prov'd *That* to be the plan, and the only plan of the enterprize on its outſet: I maintain alſo, that it gradually varied from that plan, and that the very idea of it was totally vaniſhed at the time when the council of war ſat on the 25th of *September*; I don't ſpeak of an actual perfect ſurprize only, where the march and attack are all included in the compaſs of a few hours, but of ſuch a degree of ſurprize as ſhou'd afford, in all human appearance, any proſpect of practicability in the attempt; which I reckon would have been the caſe, if the troops had landed in 24 or 48 hours after their appearance on the coaſt; whereas it was the 6th day ſince the appearance of the fleet, when the firſt council of war ſat, and muſt have been the eighth or ninth before the eſcalade could have been made; it was no longer time, then, for ſuch an attempt; the opportunity was gone: — It was not the ſame of any other mode of attack; which made the weakneſs of confining the operation to that ſingle idea.

The argument drawn from the article in Lord *Ligonier's* inſtructions, where he mentions, that it

MAY SUCCEED AFTER THE PLACE HAS *been thoroughly reconnoitred*, I think changes little in the ſtate of this queſtion; as that reconnoitre, if thought proper, cou'd not take up much time.—It was ſtill the ſame mode of attack.

As for the inſtances of *Bergen-op-zoom* and *St. Philips*, tho' it is allowed, that attacks of that kind may have ſucceded in ſome particular caſes without ſurprize; yet are thoſe caſes very rare, and very unlike the preſent in almoſt every circumſtance, being generally after the garriſon has been tired and diſpirited with a long ſiege, their defences ruined, their works long batter'd by a ſuperior artillery, thoſe attacks ſupported by large armies, and the plan of attack ſuddenly chang'd, (perhaps on intelligence that the guards were remiſs, or ill poſted, or of ſome treachery in the place, *&c.*) which conſtituted ſtill a ſpecies of *Surprize*. This was remarkably the caſe at *Bergen-op zoom*, where the defence was ſo entirely neglected, that it was univerſally thought to be from treachery, and a deſign to let the place fall into the hands of the *French*; yet, even here a breach, in ſome degree practicable, was made. The caſe of *St. Philips* was of the ſame kind in moſt reſpects; except that the attack was there, I think, confined to ſome of the outworks, and no attempt made on the body of the place.

I have but one more, of what our author calls his outworks or preliminaries, to conſider, and ſhall then come to my defence againſt his *attack in form*. It is his complaint againſt the land officers, or their advocate, *p.* 21, " For having *forced into* " *their ſervice*, an argument drawn from the con- " currence of the ſea-officers to the reſolution of the " firſt council of war: " yet nothing ſure can be more natural than the compliment thereby paid to the

the judgment, as well as intentions, of the gentlemen in the ſea-ſervice. The queſtion was not, as the author repreſents, a queſtion merely for the *eſcalade of Rochefort*, that would have been properly determined by the land-officers only, after the landing was effected; the queſtion certainly was, whether it was proper *to land the troops at the place therein-mentioned, and under the circumſtances therein deſcribed, in order afterwards to eſcalade Rochefort*, no other ſpecies of attack then offering itſelf? This the whole tenor of that council of war ſo plainly evinces, that it is impoſſible a doubt ſhou'd remain about it, in the mind of any man who takes the trouble to read it over, as it ſtands verbatim in the *Enq. p.* 104.

Where in the beginning of it he will find, " *That the firſt object was to determine, whether a* " *proper landing-place could be found for landing the* " *troops*, and that a report made by the rear-admi- " ral, *&c.* being produced,

" The council having taken the ſaid report into " conſideration, and examined the pilots, *&c.*—it " appears that there are but two landing places, " and that the troops could not be reimbarked " from either in bad weather, the ſwell of the ſea " making ſo great a ſurf on the ſhore, that no " boats would be able to approach it to take off the " troops; the ableſt pilot having informed the " council, that he had been at anchor ſeven " weeks in this road, and not a boat been able to " paſs or repaſs: and it likewiſe appears, that, in " caſe the troops ſhould be overpower'd by the " enemy, they could have no protection from the " ſhips, the ſhoal water preventing their coming " within gun-ſhot."

It then, in *the ſecond place*, conſiders the nature of the attack on *Rochefort*, and concludes,

" *All which* being taken into conſideration, *&c.* " — or conſequently ſucceeding in an enterprize " founded on the plan of an aſſault or eſcalade " merely, *and the uncertainty of a ſecure retreat for* " *the troops* if landed, the council are *unanimouſly* " of opinion, that ſuch an *attempt* is neither ad- " viſeable nor practicable."

Thus it is plain to a demonſtration, that the nature of the *landing place*, the *openneſs of the bay*, the *want of protection for the troops from the ſhips*, *and of ſecurity for their retreat*, were as much the objects of deliberation, as the *eſcalade* of *Rochefort*. The operation in queſtion, therefore, conſiſted of two branches; that of the landing and bringing off the troops on one hand, and the attack of the place on the other; in the former of which, the ſea-officers being the proper judges, as the land officers were in the other, it ſeem'd natural, and agreeable to his M's inſtructions, (which preſcribe a joint council of war in that ſituation) that one general opinion ſhou'd be taken on the whole, which was done. So that, if the opinion of the ſea-officers was founded in their acquieſcence to that of the land-officers, as the author advances, I apprehend the land-officers might, with as much reaſon, aſcribe their part in the determination to the opinion they had of the judgment and knowledge of the ſea-officers; as, in fact, that determination was principally form'd upon thoſe conſiderations, which ſhew'd how extremely precarious *the retreat of the army* muſt be, from that ſtate of the landing place; as is explicitely declared by every one of thoſe gentlemen who were members of that council. So that in both ſervices, they ſeem to have acted *equally in compliance with his M's inſtructions to live in harmony with each other*.

I beg the reader's pardon for the diffultory and un-

unconnected method of argument I have hitherto purſued, in compliance with that of the gentleman whoſe ſteps I follow ; but as this ſkirmiſhing was but the prelude to his *attack in form*, which we are now come to, againſt That, as carried on with no leſs formidable an artillery than the very articles of the Report itſelf, I muſt endeavour to make a more methodical defence.

In which I ſhall attend him thro' the ſeveral articles, and his obſervations thereon, as regularly as I can ; without neglecting thoſe *ſallies of his pen*, which it would be an affront to leave quite unnoticed.

On the firſt article, which regards the attack of *Fouras* by ſea, I ſhall give the reader very little trouble : that it was propoſed by the land-officers, on the footing of a joint attack by ſea and land, particularly in the plans propoſed by M. G. *Conway* and by Col. *Wolfe*, for that purpoſe, appears from Sir *John Mordaunt's* evidence, *Enq p.* 28. — As alſo from his and Gen. *Conway's* narrative, and by Col. *Wolfe's* and Col. *Howard's* evidence at the board. So far at leaſt the land-officers ſtand acquitted, as the author, I think, confeſſes : tho' in another place, he ſays, or inſinuates, the land-officers would have taken no part of it. " *If the fleet cou'd* " *have taken* Fouras, *they were ſtill at liberty to do* " *it.*" " *Of the whole which was* their *department* " *have they, or did they attempt a ſingle part*, &c. ?"

How far it was practicable to have come at it by ſea, I ſhall no more than the board of General Officers pretend to determine ; what appears in evidence is, that the Vice-Admiral on the report of his Maſter and others whom he ſent to ſound ; and afterwards on trials made by himſelf, and by *Thirri* the pilot, with the bomb-ketches and *Coventry* frigate, judg'd it impracticable : but how far the

the *position of the fort, and the wisdom of the* French, who the author cannot suppose built it to *guard a sand-bank* weigh against this evidence, the reader must judge; one thing is certain, that the guns of a fort can annoy ships at a distance much too great for ships to form the attack of a fort.

I come now to the second article of the report, which contains the principal charge against the Commmander in Chief, and against the whole Council of War; enlarged upon and supported by the author with all the bitterness his imagination could suggest against the Land Officers particularly, and still more particularly against three of them, whom he has selected out of the eight who composed that Council as the destined objects of his rancour.

The 1st part is an accusation against the Commander in Chief Sir *J. M. for calling a Council of War instead of immediately ordering the troops to land.* But as the reason he had for taking that step are so strongly and clearly stated in his defence before the Court Martial, p. 50. that nothing can be added to them, to those I refer the reader; the rather as they were in a great measure the same which afterwards determined the Council of War in their Resolution, and which I shall be obliged to recapitulate on that account.

He says there, that he had a latitude given him to judge; and a council to assist him in judging: That he therefore acted agreeably to his Majesty's instructions by summoning that Council *in so important and difficult a case.*

" That it could not be disobedience to doubt.

" That it could not be disobedience to desire " assistance to clear up that doubt."

But as this part of the accusation is not dwelt upon by the author, I shall proceed to those which follow,

follow, and which all relate to the resolution of the Council; not, as the author says, p. 36. *Their immediate resolution to go home again*; *or to lay aside all thoughts of prosecuting the whole plan*, as he says, p. 56.--But merely not to land under the particular circumstances, and for the particular end (that of the escalade) which were then alone before them.

For the resolution *to go home again*, which was proposed in that Council of War, *was over-ruled there*, as appears from General *Conway's Narrative*, *Enquiry*, p. 37. "But a question being then proposed for determining to come back to *England*, "I opposed it, as it was not in that view I gave "my assent to the former question; and thought "we should by all means see what farther could be "done, *&c.*"

Thus it appears not only that the Council of War did not, *immediately resolve to go home again*, as is advanced, but did in effect *resolve the contrary*, by considering and rejecting a proposition stated for that purpose.

But as the grand question, *Why they did not actually resolve to land?* still remains to be cleared up, I must beg the reader's patience, while I endeavour to retrace in his mind those facts and those ideas which the author has exhausted all his logick and eloquence to obliterate.

First then it must be considered, upon what intelligence, and upon what plan, this Expedition was sent out.

2dly, What new intelligence, or what new circumstances, intervened to affect that plan previous to the Council of War of the 25th *September*.

And 3dly, What particular evidence appeared at that Council to induce them to come to that unanimous opinion which they gave.

As

As to the intelligence the government had received, it lies in a pretty ſhort compaſs, and was in ſubſtance as follows.

Some time in the year 1754, an *Engliſh* officer (Captain, now Lieutenant *Cl—ke*) returning from *Gibraltar*, was led by his curioſity to *Rochefort*, where he ſtaid a few days, and was, I think, allowed to walk, in company with a *French* engineer, twice round the works, which he *imagined* to be at that time ſo weak, that it would not be difficult to take the place by eſcalade or ſurprize.

The account he gave was in ſubſtance, That there was an opening in the rampart by the river-ſide; that the greateſt part of the rampart was not regularly flanked; that there were no outworks, and that the ditch was imperfect; nay, that in ſome places there was no ditch at all. On the other hand, as he himſelf ſtates, there was a large and high rampart of earth well faced with ſtone round the place; that rampart was every where flanked with redans (there were alſo ſome baſtions, or half baſtions) the ditch was wet good part of the way round on each ſide from the river; the opening he mentioned was in low, marſhy ground by the river-ſide, already cut with muddy ditches, into which the tide flowed; and there were, when he was there, though in time of peace, 1,000 marines in garriſon; he had taken no plan of the place; he did not know the heighth of the rampart; he did not know poſitively, whether there were draw-bridges before the gates; he could not account for the vaſt maſs of earth that compoſed the rampart; which by his own gueſs, and by the account he took from an Old Geographical Dictionary, was not leſs than twenty or twenty-five feet high, and by all accounts thick enough to bear two rows of trees, and to be, I think, the chief

airing

airing of the town for coaches, and yet formed, as he ſays, in ſome places without *any ditch at all before it*. He knew nothing of the ſtate of the place *ſince the year* 1754, *nor of the number of troops in garriſon there, or ſtationed near it, and had no knowledge at all of the coaſt or landing, or the country leading to the place.*

Such was the evidence of Colonel *Cl—ke*, afterwards confirmed in ſome parts by *Joſ. Thierri*, a *French* pilot, as may be ſeen in his depoſition laid before the board of General Officers, *Enq.* p. 68. but with equal ignorance of the landing and coaſt, as alſo of the *preſent* ſtate of the place, the garriſon, and troops in the neighbourhood, he not having been *at the town for ten years paſt*. Which on the whole amounts to little more than this, That three years and an half ago, a town on the continent of *France*, had a *breach in its rampart in a low marſhy ſpot, and its ditch not compleat all round*; though that circumſtance was totally incredible as the immenſe quantity of ſolid earth, which compoſed its rampart, could no where be had ſo ready, ſo cheap, and ſo convenient as from the excavation of a ditch before it.

Such was the *only intelligence* received previous to the embarkation of the troops; except indeed that authentick account of the *French* King's forces furniſhed the Miniſtry *by their moſt confidential correſpondent*, by which it appeared, as I have ſhewn, that there did not remain much above 150,000 men, who were not *imagined* to be *probably* a great diſtance from *Rochefort* at that time.

Having thus ſtated what was the intelligence, I ſhall next ſhew what was, as I apprehend, the nature of the plan on which this Expedition was ſent out.

Which

Which, as appears by his Majesty's instructions to Sir *Edward Hawke* and Sir *John Mordaunt*, was in the first instance to *cause a diversion* in favour of his R. H. the Duke and the Electorate, at that time in the utmost danger of being overpowered by the vast superiority of the *French* forces. For the battles of *Rosbach* and *Lissa* not having been then fought, it was not expected as a thing of course, that 25 or 30,000 men were to beat 80 or 90,000; nor was it yet the system to complain, that a General, with 25,000 effective men in the field, did *no more* than *stand a battle*, and *almost gain a victory* against 70,000. For as the author says ironically, but very truly, p. 64. *There were* certainly *not so many men in the* German *as in the* French *army:* he might have added, by at least 50,000.

I say therefore, that in this light the measure was wise and solid; to draw back any part of the enemy's troops from *Germany*, or to prevent more from being sent there, was in that conjuncture of the utmost importance to the common cause, nothing was better calculated for this purpose than an alarm on the coasts of *France*; and if, in the course of that operation, any material stroke could be struck, that might essentially annoy the enemy, nobody can doubt of the propriety of making that attempt.

Such an one, I must be candid enough to own, was the attack of *Rochefort*; then the favourite, and since become the only object of this enterprize. But that the foundation on which it rested, or the particular mode pitched upon for the execution, did in any degree answer the wisdom of the design, I must, according to the best of my judgment, absolutely deny.

Because

Becauſe our intelligence was very defective as I have ſhewn; and becauſe we choſe to attack a place on the footing of a ſurprize, which could ſcarce poſſibly be ſurprized, and, by our eagerneſs in that vain purſuit, neglected every mode of attack to which that place was by its ſituation, and by the ſtate of its works, unalterably expoſed.

The Admirals and Generals, it is ſaid, ſtrongly objected to the prudence of proceeding on this plan, and on this ſcanty intelligence; they aſked for a few more battalions and an artillery fit to attack the place (Court Martial, p. 67.) knowing from its conſtruction it could make little reſiſtance againſt ſuch an attack, probably not more than of a few days only, if the garriſon was weak; it was alſo urged, that even then it did not ſeem too late to get ſome farther and *freſher* intelligence: to which it was anſwered, That no more battalions could be ſpared; that more artillery was unneceſſary, *as the ſcheme was formed upon the footing of* a Coup de Main, *or ſurprize*, and not of a regular ſiege; and in regard to intelligence, it was not to be ventured, as the *leaſt alarm muſt be fatal to the enterprize*; ſo that it was thought better to truſt to chance *for the nature of the coaſt and landing, the preſent condition of the place, the ſtate of the garriſon*, &c. than attempt to get any better information *at the riſque of the ſecret.*

Thus I think it is clear beyond a doubt, that whatever terms were uſed in the inſtructions of *forcing, vigorous impreſſions, warm alarms, burning and deſtroying*, &c. they do by no means prove, as the author is willing to conclude, that *ſurprize* was out of the queſtion in any part of this operation, *ſurprendre une place de vive force*; to *ſurprize a place by ſtorm or aſſault*, is an expreſſion uſed by Monſieur *de Feuquieres*, and exactly anſwers the idea

idea of this attack; of this ſpecies of ſurprize, which could in no ſhape be on the footing of *ſtealing into a place*, as the author ridiculouſly ſtates; but of coming near or before it by ſurprize, or with giving as little notice as poſſible to the enemy, in order afterwards to make your *vigorous impreſſion*, and make that impreſſion ſucceſsful. It does not follow, even where the utmoſt precautions are taken, that becauſe it's a *ſurprize*, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, there is to be no force uſed, and no fighting; as Prince *Eugene* found at *Cremona*, *Mantua*, and *Briſſac*, at every one of which he was repulſed, though he came before thoſe places *by ſurprize*.

I come now to ſhew how *ſurprize* being the plan, and the neceſſary plan of this undertaking, *on the footing of* a Coup de Main; that plan failed, and the very idea of it ſeemed vaniſhed even before the fleet came in ſight of the *French* coaſt, and much more ſtill during the ſix days delay between that and the meeting of the Council of War.

For firſt, by the tranſports being taken up in the river, while the troops were aſſembled in the Iſle of *Wight*, it happened that the embarkation was delayed near two months from the time of the firſt preparations, made pretty early in *July*.

2dly, No feint was ever made to draw off the attention of the enemy; but on the contrary, all our preparations carried on in ſuch a manner as clearly indicated the true deſign, *againſt the coaſt of France*, which however it might be overlooked by ſome of our politicians at home did not eſcape the vigilance of our enemy. For the aſſembling the troops at the Iſle of *Wight*, ſhewed the deſtination was Southward; but the victualling of the fleet for ſo ſhort a time, and particularly the troop of horſe embarked with forage for *ſix weeks only*,

ſhewed it was neither for *America*, nor for the *Mediterranean*; it could therefore only be for the coaſt of *France*.

And the ſcaling ladders, petards, and other preparations for a *ſurprize* were ſo *publicly* ſhipped, that they were mentioned in all the News-Papers.

From theſe circumſtances alone, it was pretty plain to an intelligent obſerver, our deſign muſt be diſcovered: the intelligence received, during the delay at the Iſle of *Wight*, plainly ſhowed it *was* diſcovered.

As early as 11th *Auguſt*, there was, in the *London Chronicle*, an article from *Paris*, ſaying, *The* French *knew our deſign was againſt their coaſt, but that it gave the court no uneaſineſs. That they ſhould not draw a ſingle man from* Germany, *but only ſend down to the coaſt, what was ſufficient for its defence.*

Another article from *Rochefort*, *That an* Engliſh *veſſel had been taken, which diſcovered our deſign to be againſt the Iſle of* Rhé *or* Oleron, *or that part of the coaſt.*

15th *Auguſt*, a Captain of a veſſel who had been priſoner at *St. Maloe's*, and was ſent back to *Guernſey*, ſwore before a magiſtrate, that the Duke *d'Aiguillon was come to viſit the coaſt, that they were making all ſorts of preparations there, and that he heard a large body of troops, he ſaid upwards of* 20,000 *men, were to march through that place next day.*

Soon after this, an intercepted letter to a *French* priſoner here, ſaid, *The Duke* d'Aiguillon *had then finiſhed the review of the coaſt, and ordered all things neceſſary for its defence.*

Captain *Cleveland*, Captain of a Man of War, about the ſame time ſpoke with a *Dutch* Man of War immediately from *Rochelle*, the firſt Lieutenant

of which told him *the* Engliſh *were then expected at* Rochelle, *&c. but that they thought themſelves ſo ſecure, they were making no extraordinary preparations.* This account was ſent up to the *Admiralty* 10th *Auguſt.*

Thus even before the embakation of the troops, was the alarm traced all along the *French* coaſt from *St. Maloe's*, &c. quite down to *Rochelle* and *Rochefort.*

The moſt ſanguine now ſhook their heads, and, how little willing ſoever they may be to own it ſince, I know, from very good authority, that ſome of the chief promoters of this project in the cabinet told their friends, *They thought the opportunity was loſt, and that the alarm had now been too long taken to have any hopes of ſucceſs.*

With theſe auſpicious omens for a *ſurprize*, the fleet ſailed from *Spithead* on the 8th *September*, being about two months after the firſt ſo *public* preparations for this *ſecret* Expedition; and ſtill ſailed without any *newer* or *better* information of the coaſt or place they were going to, than thoſe I have mentioned to have been received two months before; *ſo fatal was the leaſt alarm ſtill underſtood to be to the deſign.*

The very day after it ſailed, a *Spaniſh* veſſel bound to *Havre-de-Grace* paſt through our fleet, as did almoſt every day ſome neutral veſſel.

On the 11th *September*, Captain *Proby* of the *Medway* ſpoke with a *Dutch* ſhip, the *Marguerita*, from *Vannes* to *Dort*, who ſaid, *An embargo was then laid on all ſhipping in* France, *as they expected a deſcent on the coaſt, and particularly on the ſide of* Rhé, Rochelle, *&c.*

13th *September*, being then a little to the Weſtward of *Plymouth*, Captain *Gilchriſt* of the *Southampton* brought into the fleet a *French* frigate, called

the

the *Emerald*, which he took off *Breſt* the day before, among whoſe papers was found a letter to Captain *Perigni*, Captain of that ſhip, who was killed in the engagement, of which the following is an extract:

St. Mathieu 4th *Sept.* 1757.

" I received lately your letter, my dear *Perigni*, " in a trip I made to *Breſt*. You know that I ar- " rived there the 20th; the Duke *d'Aiguillon* the " day before in the evening. I was ſent here the " 21ſt, to inſpect the batteries, and to ſee them in " condition, *&c.*— If the marine has taken care to " ſecure *Breſt*, the land has not been idle. We " have here, at two or three leagues about us, near " 7000 *regular troops*, and 1500 gardecotes. There " are alſo regular troops and gardecotes in the " diſtrict of *Croſan*; and all the batteries of that " ſide are alſo prepared."

By this it appears authentically, that the coaſt had been long alarmed, and that there were more regular troops upon it than our Miniſters *gueſſed*; 7000 near *Breſt*, and more on the other ſide the *Breſt* Water.

Afterwards it is ſaid, there was farther information by ſome *Dutch* veſſels from *Rochelle* of the alarm and preparations making in thoſe parts.

The fleet came in ſight of the Iſle of *Oleron* on the 20th *September*, the 22d at night they entered the *Pertuis d'Antioche*.

The Iſle of *Aix* was taken on the 23d.

The report from the Rear Admiral and Captains ſent to ſound and reconnoitre the coaſt, in order to *diſcover a landing-place*, was made on the 24th in the afternoon, and the Council of War met next morning, 25th.

Thus, I think, I have ſhewn, that *ſurprize* was really the plan of this Expedition; and alſo that the idea of it certainly no longer exiſted when the Council of War met. So that I do not ſay it was *improbable*, it was *impoſſible* the enemy, amidſt all their alarm and care for every other part of the coaſt, ſhould have totally neglected *Rochefort*, perhaps the moſt important, and one of the weakeſt on it, to the degree that is now ſuppoſed or *pretended*; to the degree *of not repairing a breach*, not making a *coupure* for their defence, when an enemy had been *actually in ſight ſix days*. For, as our author ſays, p. 28. *Though we ſhould not have too high an opinion of the* French *wiſdom and ability*; *yet I do ſuppoſe, that in matters of defence, they do conduct themſelves on principles ſimilar to thoſe which are adopted by the reſt of mankind.*

But, ſays the Report of the board of General Officers, and ſo ſays the author after them, *It does not appear that there were then, or at any time afterwards, either a body of troops or batteries on the ſhore ſufficient to prevent the attempting a deſcent.*

It is not quite clear, what number might be ſufficient to prevent a deſcent: The Quarter-Maſter General, on the Expedition, Colonel *Wolfe*, being aſked the queſtion, ſaid, "He imagined "1000 foot and 200 horſe might be ſufficient "to oppoſe the landing of 2 or 3000 men from "boats;" which was more by all calculations than the boats of the fleet contained. But as there were ſand hills near the ſhore (which the author remarks, with a ſort of triumph, were *no leſs than forty yards from high-water mark*, p. 37.) and as the troops could have no aſſiſtance from the cannon of the ſhips, it is imagined half that number doing their duty, might prevent it;

and

and more than these were seen by Admiral *Broderick* on the 23d or 24th at that very place.

But in this the report has selected the only objection, on which no stress was laid, and which is not even taken notice of in the Council of War; for had the resistance to be expected in the landing been the chief objection, it certainly should have been risqued, as it appears was the opinion of the Generals and the Council of War in their subsequent resolution to land; if they were repulsed in that attempt, the evil was not very great, perhaps the loss of a few hundred men; and certainly, as the author says, *Lives must be risqued, and Christian blood spilt upon such occasions.* But the danger here arose from the total want of protection from the ships in case of a retreat; and the total insecurity of any communication with the fleet from the situation of the landing-place on the open bay: as appears from the words of the Council of War, the opinion of the Sea Officers given there, and the evidence of the Pilot who had had experience of it; and also by the depositions of Admiral *Knowles* and Admiral *Broderick* at the board of General Officers, p. 35 and 46.

And though in these times of clamour and enquiry, an Officer is almost afraid to name the word *Retreat*; I know of no one General of character, ancient or modern, nor no writer on the art of war, who has not looked upon that as a capital and most essential point in all military undertakings.

If you land in an *American* island, where you know the amount of the force that can come against you, you may be easy about it; but none but a madman could be indifferent about the retreat of his army from the continent of *France*.

I must also insist, if authority were wanting to

prove a thing ſelf-evident, that Lord *Ligonier's* paper delivered to Sir *John Mordaunt* does, notwithſtanding the author's attempt to invalidate it, contain a moſt diſtinct and explicit inſtruction on this head, not at all weakened by any other part of thoſe inſtructions.

His words, which do honour to his ſkill and judgment, are,

" If an attempt is to be made on *Rochefort*, it " will be the part of the Admiral to *know the coaſts* " *to cover the landing by the diſpoſition of his ſhips*, " and to deſtroy any barbette batteries the enemy " may have upon the ſhore, ſtill remembering " that if the troops are landed at too great diſtance " from the place, *the deſign will become dangerous*, " *and probably impracticable.*

" *A ſafe and well-ſecured communication between* " *the camp and the ſea, from whence you are to re-* " *ceive your ſupplies of all ſorts, is abſolutely neceſ-* " *ſary*; THE WHOLE DEPENDS UPON IT."

It appears here upon the moſt reſpectable authority, *That the ſhips ſhould lye up to aſſiſt the landing*; *that the retreat, and alſo the communication with the ſhips, ſhould be ſecured*; *that the whole depends upon it*; and that the deſign would become *dangerous* and *probably impracticable*, if the troops were landed *at too great diſtance from the place.*

Now it is certain the landing-place, or places near *Chatelaillon*, had all the diſadvantage they could have under every one of theſe circumſtances; *the ſhips could not lye up within two miles*; *the retreat and communication were not ſecured*, and the landing-place was ten or twelve miles from *Rochefort.*

But the author tells us gravely, that *by throwing up an entrenchment on the ſhore, the retreat would have been ſufficiently ſecured*; and, with the

greateſt injuſtice to Lord *Ligonier's* judgment, quotes his authority for this egregious blunder; as if caſting up an entrenchment on the ſhore would prevent *the wind from changing to the Weſt*, or *the open bay from being ruffled with a ſtorm*; without which the ſecuring the retreat by land, while the communication was cut off by ſea, would be like conſtructing a *Tête de Pont* to repaſs a river, when you had no bridge to croſs it.

But that a weſterly wind would have cut off the communication, has been already proved, and even the author is candid enough to allow the *poſſibility of the winds changing*; which the Council of War thought a contingency too probable to riſque the loſs of the whole army upon, at a time when they had no proſpect at all of ſucceſs, in the only mode of attack which then offered.

But we are told, p. 37. that Sir *Edward Hawke* ſays in his letter to Mr. *Pitt: He and every one elſe were of opinion the landing might be effected.* I have already ſaid, *That every one was of that opinion*, at leaſt that it was *poſſible*; but I have alſo ſhewn, that *every one* (Sir *Edward Hawke* not excepted) *was againſt that landing*, as appears from the firſt Council of War, *not merely on account of the eſcalade.*—We are told alſo that Admiral *Broderick* ſays, "He could have got out of the boats with-"out wetting his ſhoes!" that is true; but then the ſame Admiral *Broderick* alſo ſays, (being aſked, *If the men of war could cover the landing or retreat?) He don't think they could do either the one or the other.* Court Martial, p. 45.

He alſo ſays, That the changing of the wind would have cut off the communication with the ſhips at that landing-place.—For, being aſked, "Whether ſeveral winds might not have detained "the fleet in the road of *Baſques?* he anſwers,

that " *he refers to the Council of War*, saying, " *That the same wind which would have prevented* " *the troops from rembarking*, would have de- " tained the squadron there," *Enq.* p. 46.

Admiral *Knowles* also gives his opinion precisely to the same effect, and almost in the same words, *Enq.* p. 35. which shews, that there were *other considerations* attended to in that Council, besides *the opinion of the Land Officers on the escalade.*

But as a farther proof of Admiral *Broderick's* good opinion of this landing-place, the author tells us, that the Admiral declares, " That men of " war could come within *two miles*; and that the " sand hills were *forty yards* distant from high- " water mark."

These may be very good reasons in the new system of warfare; according to the old notions of things, they would have been reckoned very bad ones. As two miles is confessedly *out of gun-shot*, which all the Admirals declare at the Council of War; and *forty yards*, the distance of the sand hills, is about *one fifth of a point blank musquet-shot.*

So that I am very curious to know what the *Country Gentleman's* idea is of the utility of men of war *at two miles distance*; or, how near he thinks the sand hills should be to annoy the troops on their landing?

As to the effect of the bombs *in clearing the ground for a mile beyond them*, as we are told, p. 43. *and the landing under the protection of bomb-ketches:* it is so much the idea of a Country Gentleman *indeed*, that it is impossible to reason seriously upon it: it being known there were but two bomb-ketches in the fleet.

There is yet another extraordinary instance of this plain Country Gentleman's *veracity* on this same head, *p.* 41. where he tells us positively,

" That

" That Admiral *Knowles*, in concurrence with " the Admiral and Captains who went to recon- " noitre, had assured them (the Generals) there " were two landing-places out of the reach of any " battery; that the beach was dry, sandy, firm, " *&c.* and though the cannon from the men of " war could not annoy the troops, yet the bomb- " ketches might," *&c.*

I have looked over Admiral *Knowles's* evidence with attention, and can find no such words in it any where, nor any thing relative to the landing-place at *Chatelaillon*, but what follows:

" Being asked what kind of landing-place there " was at *Chatelaillon* bay for boats?" answered, " *He was not there, but refers to Rear-Admiral* " Broderick," *Enq.* p. 45.

So that Admiral *Knowles's Concurrence* does not add much weight to the opinion of those Gentlemen; what that was I have already stated.

Such was the nature of the intelligence received by the Council of War and by the General Officers on this head, and such their reasoning upon it.—*But Officers it seems should not reason!* and one of them is expressly condemned for *judging by reasoning and intelligence*, p. 36. their duty all lying in the narrow compass of the word *Obedience. The first duty of a soldier is obedience.—If he is ordered on an attack, he is not to ask whether he can get back.—Who constituted them Counsellors of state, and submitted the propriety of their orders to their decision*, &c? p. 34.

It is rather odd, that the author himself should overturn all this fine declamation in the very next paragraph: where he says, " This must be the case " when orders are *express* and *positive*. Where in- " deed *discretionary orders* are given, there arises a " latitude and power of judging. *Such was un-*

" *doubtedly*

" *doubtedly the preſent caſe.*" He allows they had a latitude to judge *in the preſent caſe!* To his queſtion therefore, *Who conſtituted them Counſellors of State?* the anſwer is eaſy, It was the author himſelf: he firſt conſtituted them ſo in order to condemn them afterwards for being ſo; ſince in reality their part was no more than this, that being to determine on the execution of an enterprize, *of which they were made the judges*, by his own conceſſion, they did *preſume ſo far* as to form that judgment on *reaſoning* and *intelligence*, two aſſiſtants, which, if ſome friends of the author had conſulted a little more fully, it would not have done them any diſcredit.

But to *think at all* was the crime; and to think about ſecuring a *retreat* for the army, abſolute cowardice: *If a ſoldier is ordered to an attack, he is not to aſk whether he can get back*, p. 34.

The author to be ſure means this of a General *acting with diſcretionary power*, or elſe it is impertinent, and no way applicable to the preſent queſtion; and yet ſo applied, certainly conſtitutes a very curious doctrine for the command of armies. I remember in a ſilly Novel an account of a great General, called *Tête à Peruque*, or *a Wig-block*; who is deſcribed as a perſon of undaunted courage and heroic reſolution *(a heaven ſent general)* but who never made calculations, ſuppoſed difficulties, or thought of *retreats*; he makes a noble campaign with infinite perſonal ſpirit, and many brave exploits, but at the end of it has the misfortune to find himſelf and the remains of his army, after many defeats, caught in a mouſe-trap.

Inſtances not much unlike it are to be found in more ſerious Hiſtory, particularly that of a prince of *Saxe Eiſenach*, who having landed 10,000 men in an iſland of the *Rhine*, *without ſecuring his retreat*,

treat, was forced to surrender himself and his whole army by capitulation to Marshal *Crequi*.

Another instance of a similar kind happened, as I remember, to a corps of *Spanish* troops landed in *Ireland*, who were obliged to surrender prisoners of war, having no care taken for their retreat.

Monsieur *de Feuquieres* condemns the misconduct of the Duke of *Saxe Eisenach* as a most shameful breach of military duty, and ranks it among those dishonourable capitulations of places for which governors have been punished; not on account of the capitulation itself, which his situation made necessary, but of the imprudence with which he had brought himself into that situation, *Mem. de Feuq.* vol. iv. p. 214. Nor could any officer, or any man of common sense, form a different opinion of it, till this new system of Generalship was established.

Thus it stood with respect to the landing; the next part of the charge regards the attempt to be made on *Rochefort*. Where the board of General Officers declare, *That it does not appear to them, that there were any sufficient reason to induce the Council of War to believe that* Rochefort *was so far changed in regard to it's strength or posture of defence, as to prevent all attempts of an attack upon the place, in order to burn and destroy the docks, magazines, arsenals, and shipping.*

By the words *all attempts of an attack upon the place*, one should imagine, that a great variety of attacks or attempts offered themselves, in that Council of War; whereas it was impossible to have heard the examination with common attention or candour, and not perceive that the attempts on *Rochefort* were all *then* reduced to a *single one*, namely, that *of a Coup de Main or surprize*.

For

For first, it is known that an attack in form was out of the question, as the Chief Engineer declared before the Council of War in these words: *That he does not imagine any regular attack was intended against that* (Rochefort) *or any other place, the small quantity of artillery we have not being sent on that plan*, Enq. p. 105.

And, if that could not be done, neither was there any better chance of success against the docks or magazines, as the same gentleman declares before the board of General Officers, where being asked, *whether, though the Town could not be taken, we might not destroy the docks, magazines*, &c. *with bombs and red hot balls?*

He says, *Undoubtedly by carcases and shells one might destroy a great many of the stores, but to do it in any tolerable degree, would require five times the number of mortars we had: Besides, such a method would take up time, and there would likewise be great difficulty in bringing up sufficient stores for that purpose to the place*, Enq. p. 57.

This could not well be otherwise, as the landing-place was not less than ten or twelve miles from *Rochefort*; as the transports could not lie nearer than a mile and half from the shore; and as the least ruffle of wind would have made the landing any stores impracticable *in that open part of the bay.*

But the regular attack of the place being thus found impracticable, as also any *considerable impression* on the magazines, docks, *&c.* on that side, it was plain, that in the question before the Council of War of the 25th, all was reduced to the consideration of the direct assault by storm or escalade. The nature of which, and the probability of its success, I shall now consider; as that whereon the whole of this question seems to depend,

pend, as far as relates to the reſolution of the firſt Council of War.

Firſt, then, it appeared by the concurrent teſtimony of the priſoners ſeparately examined, that there was a Marſhal of *France* at *Rochefort*. There were alſo by the whole tenor of their accounts, a conſiderable number of troops there, or in the neighbourhood which might be thrown in at pleaſure.—The names and number of battalions had been particularly mentioned by ſome of them; which was confirmed by the appearance of men and officers in different uniforms on the ſhore, with colours, *&c.* A body of troops had been ſeen by Admiral *Broderick* on the 23d and 24th near *Chatelaillon*; another by Major *Deſtriſay* and others on the 24th near *Rochelle*; more were ſeen paſſing from *Oleron* to the main land, and another body near *Fouras:* There were certainly marines in *Rochefort*, even when Colonel *Clerke* was there, though in time of peace, there were 1,000; the dock-men are very numerous, as I have ſaid, the place is populous, and the inhabitants conſtantly uſed to arms; there is generally, and was now ſaid to be, a *Swiſs* regiment there; there is always a company of cadets, and one of bombardiers; and the crews of the ſhips alone then in the river, if compleat, amounted to near 3,000 men.

So that excluſive of either troops or militia from the country or adjacent towns, there could not fail of being a garriſon of ſome thouſand men in the place; whereas our 10 battalions deſtined to the aſſault or eſcalade, conſiſted of no more than 7,288 men fit for ſervice.

I deſire the reader to recollect what has been ſaid of the ſtate of the place from Colonel *Clerke's* and the Pilot's evidence.

Now

Now from that ſtate alone, it is plain that the hopes of ſucceſs muſt be either from the opening by the river, or by an eſcalade of the rampart. As to the former, it muſt appear to any one at all acquainted with military affairs, that twenty-four, or at moſt forty-eight hours would make that part, ſo ſituated, as ſtrong, (at leaſt againſt a *Coup de Main)* as any part of the rampart, by means of a good entrenchment and paliſſade, eſpecially as, beſides the ditches mentioned, there was *a large canal* to paſs; or rather *two*, as it muſt be twice paſt before you come into the place; and as that part, beſides the cannon on the rampart, would be flanked by the broadſides of the five ſhips then in the river, being on the water level; and that within leſs than half muſket-ſhot; the canal and ditches ſerving as *avant foſſes*, to be paſt in ſight of the enemy.

As to the rampart, it was ſtrong and high, as I have ſaid; but the exact height of it was not known, which was a capital defect in an attempt by eſcalade, as it would be difficult, if not impoſſible, to get it afterwards, and yet neceſſary to be known with preciſion. L. C. *C—ke*, ſenſible of this omiſſion, ſays in his letter to Sir *J. Lig——r*,

" I have thought ſince, that it would not have " been amiſs, if I had known for certain the exact " height of the rampart, I think that it could not " well exceed twenty-five feet, *&c.*"

It would indeed have been *not amiſs*, but very material, as in an eſcalade, which was in a manner the only reſource, every thing depended upon it.

" I ſuppoſe, ſays Monſieur *de Santa Cruz*, that " *before* you attempt the ſurprize of any fortified " or encloſed place, you have an exact knowledge " of its ſituation, its works, and *the height* " *of its walls*, in order to carry ladders of a

" proper

" proper height, or exact measure — *d'une juste* " *mesure.*

" It is impossible to scale walls that are too " high, *&c.* for if you plant your ladders too per- " pendicular, there will be no getting up them, " and if you give them too much slope, they bend " with every motion and break."

If they are too long, they are easily overturned; if too short, they are absolutely useless.

Now though Col. *C—ke* in this account *supposes* the rampart only twenty-five feet high, others acquainted with the place said, they imagined it was not less than thirty, and some even more.

Our ladders were part of them thirty, and part twenty-five feet long; if the rampart was twenty-five feet, our ladders of twenty-five would have been scanty, as there must be allowance made for their slope; if it was thirty feet, *quite too short*, and those of thirty feet scanty.

One of these ladders planted against the wall at the fort of *Aix*, was too short by several feet; and at the same time so weak and tottering, that several officers have declared, if their duty did not require it, they would not have gone up for 500 *l.* though no enemy opposed them. I mention this to shew in part how tickliſh an operation a mere escalade is.

Indeed to that degree, that it is quite exploded, except where it can be done by surprize. I won't enter into any of the many ways there are of defeating it; but to shew I have not advanced any thing lightly, will here set down the opinions of some of the most approved authors on that subject.

Monsieur *de Feuquieres*, in his treatise on surprizes, says *,

* " Une maxime generale est d'entreprendre toujours *avec* " *secret, avec une connoissance parfaite de l'entreprise meditée*, de la " diligence dans la marche, de la vivacité, dans l'execution, " *& de beaucoup de prevoyance dans la retraite.*

" A con-

" A conſtant maxim is to conduct theſe enterpriſes " *with ſecrecy*, with a *perfect knowledge in the de-*

" It doit auſſi être couvert par quelque demonſtration, qui " en cas qu'il parvienne à la connoiſſance de l'enemi detourne " ſon attention du veritable projet.

" On doit avoir *une exacte connoiſſance du païs qui conduit a* " *l'objet de l'entreprize*; de ſa ſituation, de ſa force naturelle, de " *celle des troupes enemies* ſur leſquelles on veut entreprendre ; " de *leur negligence ou precautions à ſe garder* ; *parceque de toutes ces* " *connoiſſances depend la reuſſite du projet.*

" La marche vers l'objet de entreprize doit être faite *avec un* " *grand ſecret*, & beaucoup *de diligence.*

" En general, rien ne doit être tenté ſans une certitude preſ- " que ſure de reuſſir. Il faut donc avoir exactement fait re- " connoitre par des eſpions fideles & capables *le terrein des en-* " *virons de la place & tous les manquemens de ſa garde.*

" Il faut arriver de nuit avec grand ſilence.

" Les places les plus expoſées à être inſulteés de vive force " ſont celles dont les *ouvrages ne ſont point revêtus*, parce que ſi " la fortification de terre n'eſt pas entretenuë & que les foſſés " ne ſoient pas à fond de cuve ou fort *fangeux*, *il n'eſt pas im-* " *poſſible* de ſurprendre ces places de vive force, *lorſqu'on peut ſe* " *porter devant avec aſſez de ſecret pour que l'enemi ne ſoit pas* " *averti de l'entreprize.*

Du Marq. *De Santa Cruz.*

" Je ſuppoſe qu'avant *de vous determiner* à vouloir ſurprendre " une place ou lieu fermé, vous avez une connoiſſance parti- " culiere de ſa ſituation, de ſes ouvrages & *de la hauteur de ſes* " *murailles, afin de porter des eſchelles d'une juſte meſure.*

" Je ſuppoſe auſſi que vous avez connoiſſance *du nombre de* " *ceux qui la defendent, de la maniere dont les gardes ſont diſtribuées* ; " *de combien d'hommes chacune de ces gardes eſt compoſée*, &c.

" Vous calculerez *ſi vous pouvez vous retirer en ſureté du poſte* " *que vous voulez ſurprendre* eu egard aux heures dont vous " avez beſoin pour la marche, pour l'expedition & pour le re- " tour.

" Les *foſſés pleins d'eau ſont un obſtacle aux eſcalades.*

" *L'obſcurité* & le vent qui accompagnent les *nuits d'hyver* " favorizent vos troupes *pour n'etre vuës ni ouïes des enemis.*

De Monſ. *De Quinci*, ſur les ſurpriſes.

" Dans toutes ces entrepriſes *il eſt abſolument neceſſaire* de " ſçavoir *le nombre des habitants, & des troupes de la garniſon* ; *la* " *force & la ſituation des corps de garde, les lieux ou l'on poſe les* " *ſentinelles, l'ordre des rondes & des patrouilles*, &c.

" *ſign*

" *ſign meditated*, diligence in the march, vivacity " in the execution, *and much precaution for the* " *retreat.*

" It ought alſo to be covered by ſome ap- " pearance, which may divert the attention of the " enemy from the real object.

" There ought to be an *exact knowledge of the* " *country that leads to the object of the enterprize*, " of its natural ſtrength, that of the *enemy's troops* " on whom the attempt is to be made, their *neg-* " *ligence* or *precaution* in *their defence*, &c. *becauſe* " *on all theſe depends the ſucceſs of the project.*

" The march to the place to be attacked, ought " to be made with great *ſecrecy* and *expedition.*

" In general nothing ought to be attempted " without almoſt an abſolute certainty of ſucceed- " ing. You muſt therefore have the place ex- " actly reconnoitred by faithful and able ſpies: " its *environs and all the defects of its guards.*

" You muſt arrive by *night in great ſilence.*

" The places the moſt expoſed to be inſulted, " are thoſe whoſe works *are not faced*, becauſe, if " the fortifications being of earth are not kept in " repair, and that the ditches are not wet or very " muddy, it is not *impoſſible* to ſurprize ſuch a " place by ſtorm or aſſault, *provided you can bring* " *your troops before it ſo ſecretly that the enemy is* " *not apprized.*

From the Marquis *De Santa Cruz.*

" I ſuppoſe, that before you determine to at- " tempt the ſurprizing any fortified place, you " have an exact knowledge of its ſituation, its " works, and *the heighth of its walls in order to* " *carry ladders of a proper heighth*, &c.

" Si la place qu'on projette de ſurprendre eſt ſi avant dans le " païs ennemi *qu'on ne peut y arriver en un jour, il ſera pour lors* " *difficile de reuſſir dans cette entrepriſe.*"

" I alſo ſuppoſe, that you know the *number of* " *thoſe who defend it*, *the manner in which the* " *guards are poſted*, *of how many men theſe guards* " *conſiſt*, &c.

" You will calculate whether you *can retreat* " *with ſafety from the poſt you would ſurprize*, " conſidering the time neceſſary for the march, " the attempt, and the return.

" *Ditches full of water are alſo an obſtacle to* " *eſcalades.*

" The *darkneſs* and wind that accompany *winter* " *nights* are favourable to your troops, becauſe " they prevent *their being ſeen or heard by the* " *enemy.*

From M. *De Quinci*, on ſurprizes.

" In all theſe enterprizes it is *abſolutely neceſſary* " *to know the number of inhabitants and of the* " *troops of the garriſon*; the *ſtrength and ſituation* " *of the guards*, the *places where the centinels are* " *placed*, the *manner in which the rounds and patroles* " *are made*, &c.

" If the place you intend to ſurprize is ſo far " advanced in the enemy's country, *that you can-* " *not arrive there in a day*, *it will then be difficult* " *to ſucceed in ſuch an enterprize.*"

Theſe are ſome among the many military rules and maxims upon this ſubject, which whoever is at the trouble of examining will ſee are in every circumſtance contrary to the nature of the late ſcheme, and the manner of its execution as in the queſtion before the firſt Council of War. For they neither knew the *coaſt* nor *country*, the *ſtrength of the garriſon*, the *guards the enemy mounted*, the *centinels they poſted*, nor *the rounds they went*, nor were informed with preciſion of the heighth of the rampart, *&c.* What they appear to have known by poſitive evidence was, that *the ditch was wet*, the

ramparts

ramparts high and faced with ſtone; that the *nights were light*, and that they were ſo far from being able to arrive in one day, or *to conceal their march*, that the enemy muſt have known of their approach *for ſeven or eight days at leaſt, and ſeen every motion made for the attack.*

Such was the nature of this attempt for *ſurprizing Rochefort*, after the alarm, I have mentioned from certain authority, and after the fleet *had already been ſeen ſix* and muſt have been *eight or nine days* before that attempt could have been made.

I now deſire the reader to recollect what has been ſaid, touching *the only landing-places diſcovered:* he will then ſee that, in order to make this hopeleſs and truly impracticable attempt, equally contrary to the rules of war and reaſon, the Council or the Commanders in chief muſt have acted as contrary to common ſenſe, to the inſtructions given, and to the prudent and ſenſible direction of our preſent Commander in chief of his Majeſty's forces, by landing the troops at a great *diſtance from the place*, without *any protection from the ſhips*, and without any *ſecurity for the communication with the fleet*, or *the retreat of the troops.*

For had thoſe been at all ſecured, it certainly was the intention of the Commander, as it was the opinion of the Council in general, hopeleſs as the proſpect was, to have made the actual tryal. But it was not thought adviſeable to riſque the cutting off the whole army merely to *reconnoitre* with ſcarce a poſſibility of doing more; and a ſmaller number could not reconnoitre the place, as it lay ſo far up the country, without a certainty of being intercepted.

I ſhould now think enough was ſaid upon this ſubject, to convince every impartial reader, that the

determination of that Council of War, and the conduct of the General in adhering to that determination, were founded in reason, agreeable to the spirit of the orders and instructions with which he was sent, and to that *latitude and discretion* with which he was directed to judge.

But as the report of the board, and the author in support of it, seem to lay great stress in that, *It did not appear to them that there were sufficient reasons to induce the Council of War to believe that* Rochefort *was so far changed in respect to its strength or posture of defence, since the expedition was first resolved on in* England, *as to prevent all attempts*, &c.

I shall shortly recapitulate those circumstances by which I think it plainly appears, that *the strength and posture of defence of* Rochefort, *and* the prospect of succeeding against it *were very much changed since the Expedition was first resolved on in* England; though even then it was framed on no very promising grounds, at least on the footing of a Surprize, or *Coup de Main* only.

The circumstances, then unknown, which rendered it still more hopeless, and indeed quite impracticable *on that footing*, were the following:

1. The long delay since our preparations were publicly known.

2. The alarm all along the coast quite down to *Rochefort*, previous to, and during the voyage.

3. That the fleet had actually been seen on the coast six days, when the Council of War was held on the 25th.

4. That they must have been two or three days more in landing the troops and stores, and marching up to the place *to surprize it*.

5. That there was thereby time given to the enemy to assemble their troops, and that there

there was certainly a numerous garriſon in the place.

6. That any hopes from the opening near the river were totally cut off as has been ſhewn.

7. That there was a Marſhal of *France* then in the place.

8. That it was proved by poſitive witneſſes the ditch was wet, or could be flowed with water all round.

9. That our Chief Engineer (Lieutenant-Colonel *Cl—ke)* declared at the Council of War, that that circumſtance alone would defeat the eſcalade.

10. That the nights were light.

11. That the plan of the landing and approach were changed, by the failure of the attack on *Fouras.*

12. That at the only landing-places diſcovered near *Chatelaillon*, the ſhips could not lie up to cover the landing or retreat.

13. That thoſe landing-places being on the open bay, all retreat and communication with the ſhips would at once be cut off by the winds coming to the Weſt, which was expected every day.

In every one of which circumſtances it is plain, there was a change *ſince the Expedition was firſt reſolved on in* England, as theſe circumſtances either did not exiſt, or were not known at that time; and every one of them did undoubtedly *tend to put* Rochefort *in a better poſture of defence*, againſt the intended *ſurprize*, and render the ſucceſs of it quite impracticable.

So much that, had but half theſe circumſtances been known *before the Expedition was reſolved on*, I believe there is ſcarce a man in *England* wild enough to think it would or ought to have been ſent; *at leaſt on that plan.*

Such were the circumſtances in which the *ſtrength* and *poſture of defence of* Rochefort were

changed, and doubtleſs moſt eſſentially changed *ſince the Expedition was reſolved on.* A numerous garriſon in the place, a wet ditch, light nights, and a long alarm, were ugly circumſtances againſt an eſcalade; theſe were the very circumſtances apprehended, *when the ſecret was ſo ſtudiouſly kept*; when it was thought *dangerous to get intelligence even in the moſt private way*; and when the Miniſtry rejected all propoſals for a plan to attack the place in form, *for fear it ſhould take up ſix or eight days:* a regular attack was not adviſable that might take up ſix or eight days, but a *Coup de Main* might be *reaſonably* attempted at the end of that time! This is one among many of our new doctrines on the art of war. As to any material alterations in the form or conſtruction of the works that could never be the object of all this caution and apprehenſion for the ſecret, as they are not to be made on ſuch warning.

Having thus gone through the conſideration of the report, as far as relates to the reſolution of the firſt Council of War, I muſt now remark ſome extraordinary inſtances of our author's candor, judgment, and veracity in his obſervations upon it.

Firſt, as to the opening in the rampart, he tells us, p. 50. "That *Bonneau* the fiſherman, aſſured "Colonel *Clerke*, that upon the 21ſt of that very "month, when our fleet was on the coaſt, that "very ſpot remained as open, and as unfortified, "as when Colonel *Clerke* ſaw it in the year 1754; "and that this, though *reported to the General, he "would not believe.*" I have looked at the part of the Enquiry referred to *viz.* p. 52. and do not find there, nor indeed elſewhere, that any ſuch *report* was made to the General by Colonel *Clerke*, much leſs that *the General would not believe it*, as the author *aſſerts.*

What

What Colonel *Clerke* says, *Enquiry* p. 51 and 52, is, " That *Bonneau* the Fisherman, *whom he examined on the* 28*th*, *after the Council of War had come to a resolution to land*, and who had been examined by Major General *Conway*, &c. seemed to be very distinct in regard to many particulars, for so common a man, much more than he could have imagined; he mentioned particularly that he *went by* Rochfort on the 21st of the month, and that the place which he, Colonel *Clerke*, *described to him as open and unfortified*, was in the same condition that day." These are Colonel *Clerke's* words, on which I have two things to remark, besides the veracity of this *report being made to the General*, and *his not believing it:* As first, that it was *on the* 28th, after the second Council of War had determined to land, and consequently could not any ways affect the resolution of the first Council of War; and secondly, that the man, by that account, had only *past by Rochefort*, at least by that part in question, and consequently that an entrenchment thrown up there, which is not a very conspicuous or striking object, might easily escape the observation of a fisherman *passing by in a boat.*

As to the General reasoning on the nature of this opening, I refer to what has been said in the former part on that subject: But as it is affirmed, *That all the reasoning relative to the throwing up an entrenchment, and fortifying that opening was only supposition*, I must observe, that the evidence of *Pierre Girard*, who was there on the 20th *September*, *the day before* Boneau *past by*, and deposed, " That the Avant guard (which is the part immediately before *that opening) was then fortified and defended by a fascine battery of several pieces of cannon just finished*," Enq. p. 58. As also the Postscript of the Letter from *Rochefort* of the 18th, found in

the Prieſt's houſe on the Iſle of *Aix*; which ſays, *the Governor was then taking the beſt precautions for ſecuring the place*, prove it was not *mere ſuppoſition*. But granting that it were ſuppoſition, the ſuppoſition that the enemy would on expectation of an immediate attack, certainly entrench and fortify that opening (unleſs they could overflow the ground) is ſo natural, that it would be ſtupidity not to ſuppoſe it. *That we ſhould never take it for granted, that all is done which ought to be done even in* France, I do agree is reaſoning right, as the author ſays; but to ſuppoſe that an enemy will not do any thing at all, or will neglect ſuch things as are things of courſe, and can neither be overlooked, nor forgot, is not to reaſon at all; and I think one might juſt as well ſuppoſe an enemy would not fire their muſquets, or draw their ſwords, as that with hands and materials at command, they ſhould not make up a *breach in their rampart*. To make ſtrained calculations of what your enemy will do argues timidity, but not to make any calculations at all argues folly; and an army may as well have no General, or a General no head, if ſuch calculations are not made.—One of the greateſt Generals among the moderns, the Duke of *Parma*, once miſt an opportunity of taking *Hentry* IV. of *France*, who came out to ſkirmiſh with a ſmall party of light horſe; but being reproached with it afterwards, when it was known the king was there, he anſwered *, "That he ſhould do the ſame again, "*becauſe his conduct was founded in reaſon*, as he "thought he had to do with a General of an army, "and not with a Captain of *Huſſars*." He

* "Che ſe foſſe a farla tornarebbe a far la medſima deli-"beratione perche era dettata dalla ragione havendo creduto "di aver da fare con un Capitano Generale d'un exercito, & "non con un Capitano di cavalli leggieri." *Davila, Hiſt.*

ſpoke

ſpoke like a man and a ſoldier, as he had acted; and felt himſelf above judging, or being judged, by *ſubſequent intelligence*.

I muſt add to this article of *ſuppoſition* what has appeared farther relative to the fortifying this opening: Firſt, Colonel *Clerke* declares, " That *ſuch* " *an entrenchment as he himſelf threw up in the Iſle* " *of* Wight *might be thrown up in a day and an* " *half, or perhaps even in a day.*" Enq. p. 56.

As in fact, *Ten yards of that entrenchment, though of a ſtronger profile than an ordinary entrenchment, and in ſo holding a clay that it was neceſſary to mattock it, was thrown up by ten men, which was not ſo many hands as might have been employed on it, in thirty-ſix hours.*

2dly, Lieutenant *Roy* Engineer, depoſed at the General Court Martial, " That in an ordinary ſoil " ſo ſmall an extent of entrenchment as ſixty, " an hundred, or three hundred yards, might be " thrown up; and in the ſpace *of two or three* " *days* made ſo ſtrong *as to render it unaſſailable* " *till ſuch time as it was battered and laid open by* " *cannon*; and in the ſame time he thinks even a " *covered way, glacis, and perhaps an advanced ditch* " *might be made.*" Court Martial, p. 89.

Colonel *Clerke* alſo declares he imagines, " That " ſuch an Entrenchment might be thrown up, " *ſo as to put it on a footing with the reſt of the* " *place in a few days time.*" Court Martial, p. 34.

I ſhall now ſum up the evidence on this head, by which, I think, it will appear there is a *demonſtration*, on the footing of that evidence, *that* Rochefort *could not be taken by eſcalade.*

It was proved to the Council of War by *direct and poſitive evidence*, that the ditch *could be filled with water.* Enq. p. 105.

Colonel

Colonel *Clerke* declared before the ſame Council of War, that, if it were ſo, *the rampart could not be ſcaled*, Enq. p. 105.

Colonel *Clerke* alſo declares at the General Court Martial, that *in a few days* the opening might be made *as ſtrong as the rampart*. General Court Martial, p. 34.

So that *the rampart being unaſailable by an eſcalade, and the opening made as ſtrong as the rampart*; it is plain, on that evidence, that unleſs the *French* had neglected to make the entrenchment in *eight days*, which might have been made in *two*; a neglect which, I think, I have ſhewn was not only improbable, but *impoſſible*; then it ſeems *impoſſible* alſo on the evidence before that Council of War, and on Colonel *Clerke's* own principles, *That the place could be taken by eſcalade*.

Before I go into the author's *candid reflexions* on the evidence relative to the ditch being flowed, it will be proper to obviate an aſſertion of his (for he loves *aſſertions)* which would ſave the trouble of all argument on that head; namely, *That a couple of field pieces would blow up a ſluice in half an hour, and then what would become of the wet ditch?* p. 54.

Suppoſe I were to imitate the author's ſtyle and method of reaſoning; and anſwer this round laconic aſſertion by as round an one, *viz. That a couple of field pieces could* NOT *blow up a ſluice in half an hour?* my logick would certainly be as good, and my aſſertion, I believe, much better and truer.

For, if wet ditches were to be diſpoſed of with this expedition and facility, I fancy few Engineers would have been at the trouble of making them by raiſing ſluices with great labour and expence; nor would Marſhal *Vauban*, a tolerable judge in thoſe caſes, have given his opinion as he does, that *thoſe ditches*

ditches which are dry, but can be flowed with water, are the very beſt ſort of ditches for the defence of a fortified place.

Les Meilleurs (Foſſés) *ſont ceux qui étant ſecs peuvent être inondés*, Att. & Def. p. 26.

He conſtructed many on that plan; and doubtleſs was unacquainted with the author's ſecret for blowing up his ſluices with two field pieces of cannon in ſo ſhort a ſpace of time.

In the preſent caſe it ſeems particularly difficult; as one does not at firſt ſight conceive how *two field pieces* could be mounted in battery, or ſtand at all againſt a place which is able to mount above 100 *pieces of battering cannon*; and was under no neceſſity of raiſing batteries, as they could run their cannon to any part of the rampart, and open what embrazures they pleaſed. And certainly wherever the ſluices were, they muſt be under protection of the rampart.—So that the author muſt firſt *make the ſluices as he pleaſes*, next *place them as he pleaſes*, and laſtly, engage the *French not to fire their cannon* (which is juſt as probable a ſuppoſition as their not raiſing *the entrenchment*) and then, perhaps, his *two little cannon* may do ſomething.

I come now to his reflexions upon the ſtate of the ditch equally juſt and true with moſt of the foregoing; particularly where he ſpeaks of the *concurrent teſtimony of Colonel* Clerke, *and the* French *Engineer, that it was a dry one:* By which one would imagine, that this *concurrent evidence* was produced at the Council of War of the 25th, and was among the arguments urged againſt the reſolution of that Council; whereas it appears by Colonel *Clerke's* teſtimony, *Enq.* p. 54. that this evidence of the *French* Engineer was not procured by Colonel *Clerke* till the 26th, *being the day after that Council of War ſat*, nor communicated

to

to Sir *John Mordaunt till the* 27th, which, as Major General *Conway* remarks, *Enq.* p. 54. was the day he made two different propoſals for landing, and the day before it was unanimouſly reſolved in the ſecond Council of War to land.

So that it can poſſibly have no weight againſt the conduct of the Generals, or the reſolutions of the Councils of War, being ſubſequent to that which reſolved not to land, and previous to that which determined to land.

As to the *contradictory evidence* on the ſubject of the ditch being wet mentioned by Sir *John Mordaunt*, on which the author plays ſo ingeniouſly, it does not appear what it was; but, by the teſtimony of ſome members of the Council of War examined at the Court Martial, it amounted to no more than that the ditch was by ſome one or more of the priſoners ſaid to be *ordinarily dry*, but *not that there were no ſluices, or that it was not poſſible to fill it.* Proceedings of the General Court Martial, p. 68, and 101.

Now then let us conſider a little that evidence, which, it clearly appears, was produced before the Council of War relative to the ditch being wet, as ſtated in thoſe minutes or evidence taken by the ſaid Council, which make a part of it, and which our author again laments, p. 50. were *totally ſuppreſſed.*

Firſt then the evidence of Lieutenant-Colonel *Clerke* is in the following words: "Being aſked, if "the ditch were flowed with water, whether he "ſhould then think it practicable to take the "place by eſcalade? ſaid, *He thought not*; but "that when he ſaw the ditch, *it did not appear to "him capable of being flowed.*"

On the other hand, Monſieur *de Bonneville*, volunteer, being aſked what he knew of *Rochefort*,

fort, ſaid, " That there are ſluices there by which " they can flow the ditch, and *that it was full of* " *water all round when he was there.*"

The pilot of the *Neptune*, being called in, ſaid, " That he had been very frequently at *Rochefort*, " that he had commanded a ſmall veſſel there " many years: that they have ſluices *near the* " *Hoſpital*, by which they can fill the ditch with " water; and *that he has ſeen water in it quite* " *round the town.* Enq. 105.

There is alſo mention made of a confirmation of this evidence by priſoners, but as that is but ſlightly mentioned, and at beſt is not the moſt eligible kind of evidence, where any better is to be had, I ſhall entirely wave that; and then, I think, I may appeal to the candor of all mankind, even almoſt to that of the author, whether the evidence of a gentleman ſaying, *He thought the ditch* " *could not be flowed*;" is to be weighed againſt the poſitive declaration of two credible witneſſes, depoſing " that they ſaw the *ditch filled with wa-* " *ter all round the town*;" one of whom, ſays he, had lived many years at the place, and particularly deſcribes the manner in which the ditch was filled.

I ſay *credible witneſſes*, in ſpite of the author's reflexions on Monſieur *Bonneville*, as their evidence then appeared credible, and ſtood unimpeached; if it was falſe, it certainly was not the fault of that Council, it deceived them, as I believe it would have deceived any court in the world; and it muſt require all the good-nature of the author to ſuppoſe they themſelves contributed to that deception.

But before I take leave of Monſieur *Bonneville*, I muſt obſerve another remarkable inſtance of our author's veracity in his account of that gentleman, and his evidence, p. 54. where he tells us that he ſaid, " *To the beſt of his recollection*, there was wa-

" ter

" ter in the ditch when he was there, *&c.*" I have already quoted his words from the Council of War itſelf, and therefore need not repeat them ; thoſe words are *as poſitive as words can be*; I have alſo aſked ſeveral members of that Council of War, who all agree thoſe were his words : and who alſo agree that his ſcheme of *filling up that ditch* put ſo emphatically in *Italicks*, was not ſo much as mentioned in his evidence at that Council ; nor by any information I can get at any time *previous* to it. After he had heard of Colonel *Clerke's* opinion, declaring, that *if the ditch was wet, the place could not be eſcaladed* ; he did indeed advance this doctrine of filling up a wet ditch with ſand bags, in order to plant ſcaling ladders upon them : a doctrine ſo wild and extravagant, that though they had not had the opinion of the Chief-Engineer on the Expedition, Colonel *Clerke*, diametrically oppoſite to it, the idea of filling up the ditch of a town with ſand bags, in order to make a foundation large enough for thirty or forty ſcaling ladders abreaſt, and then to plant thoſe ladders in ſight of an enemy, and ſcale walls of twenty-five or thirty feet high, is ſo ridiculous, that one muſt have a very mean opinion of a Council of War reſolving to land an army, eſpecially ſuch an army, ſuch an handful of men for ſuch an experiment.

But this Monſieur *Bonneville*, the author *has heard, and is well founded in aſſerting it (as well* as in many more things *he aſſerts) was under the protection of one of our Generals* ; that is a part of his crime and of the General's : now as from this emphatical mention of ſo inſignificant a circumſtance, were it true, one would imagine there was ſome terrible ſecret hiſtory, or ſome wicked combination ſuſpected between theſe perſons protecting and protected. I have taken ſome pains to inform myſelf

myſelf of the hiſtory of this gentleman, by which I find (and *I am very well founded in what I aſſert*) that Monſieur *Bonneville*, a *Swiſs* gentlemant, and a Proteſtant, formerly in the *French* ſervice with Marſhal *Saxe*; and, ſince his death, four years in the *Pruſſian* ſervice, was taken into ours, and ſent as a Captain, in Lord *Loudon's American* Regiment, to *America*; that he had not been long returned from thence, when he was one day mentioned to ſome of the Generals and others concerned in this Expedition, as a perſon who might be of uſe on ſuch an occaſion, being acquainted with the *French* ſervice, and *alſo with moſt of their places, ſo that he might be able to give them ſome uſeful intelligence.*

This being afterwards reported to the Miniſtry, they thought proper to ſend him down, *on this footing*, to the Iſle of *Wight*, with a ſtrong letter of recommendation, as I have heard, to the Commander in Chief; which was the firſt of his introduction to any of the Generals on the Expedition. By the diſtribution made afterwards of the Officers of the Staff, *&c.* in the ſeveral Men of War, this gentleman *happened* to be put on board the ſame ſhip with *one of the Generals*, who, till his arrival at the Iſle of *Wight*, had never ſeen, nor, till ſome few days before, ever heard of Monſieur *Bonneville.* This, I believe, is the hiſtory of that gentleman, as far as relates to this Expedition, and to the very ſmall part he appears to have acted there; which was only that of being called as an evidence to a plain matter of fact; of which he muſt certainly have been a very competent witneſs.

I cannot quite leave the ſubject of the ditch, without taking notice of another obſervation made by the author relative to it, *viz.* that the ditch could not be flowed on account of the level of the ground: *Que cela ne pouvit être à cauſe de l'inegalité du*

du Terrein; and that our Generals ſhould not have *doubted* about the filling the ditch of a place *which lay on the ſide of an hill.* This would certainly be true, had the fact been ſo made out to them; but it happened otherwiſe, as by all the accounts of *Rochefort*, they had always underſtood that it was *on a flat*, and entirely *drained* from *marſhes*, &c. as the ſame evidence, which had ſeen water quite round, declared it to be ſo; and as Colonel *Clerke* ſeemed by no means clear of the level of the ground ſo as to determine poſitively whether the ditch could be filled by ſluices or not; the moſt that was then deſcribed being *a gentle riſe* of the ground; the author is pleaſed to exalt it into an hill; though even at the Court Martial Colonel *Clerke* ſeems to ſpeak rather dubiouſly on this ſubject, and though *he conceives* the upper part is higher than high-water mark, he owns *it is difficult to judge of the level of ground with the eye.* Court Martial, p. 35.

I come now to the attack of *Fouras*, and the conſequences of it, on which ſubject the author begins p. 36. with aſſerting, "That as to taking "that fort by land, without a ſea operation, it "never entered into the heads of any of the Coun- "cil to order it to be reconnoitred, *&c.*"—And "that it was higheſt imputation on the Council of "War never to have conſidered this point till *af- "ter they had determined to lay aſide the only meaſure "which made the fort worth attacking.*" And again, "Is it not aſtoniſhing that when Vice- "Admiral *Knowles* had reported the impracticabi- "lity of taking it by ſea; the Generals ſhould "firſt lay aſide *all thoughts of proſecuting the whole "plan* before they ever aſked, whether this ne- "ceſſary place could be taken without the aſ- "ſiſtance of ſhips?" p. 56.

But

But firſt, it appears that *Fouras was reconnoitred* together with the reſt of the coaſt by Admiral *Broderick*, and the four Captains who attended him, and who, by their report, reconnoitred from *Rochelle to Fort Fouras.*

It appears alſo by what I have already ſaid, of the propoſals for landing near and attacking that fort; that a *land attack* was not out of the queſtion.

Though at that time (I mean before the report was made by Admiral *Broderick*) *Thierri*, the pilot of the *Magnanime*, who was then much depended on, having declared, *He could carry a ſhip up to it, and beat it down in half an hour*; which then ſeemed the opinion of the Admirals alſo; this occaſioned thoſe propoſals being made *for a joint operation by land and ſea.* Yet it alſo appears by Sir *John Mordaunt's* evidence, that after the report of Admiral *Broderick* and the Captains, who had found *no landing near* Fouras, *and after Admiral* Knowles *had reported that* Fouras *could* NOT *be attacked by ſea*; all thoughts *of attacking it by a land operation only were not laid aſide*, for "that it was propoſed by "Major-General *Conway* to go that afternoon to "the Iſle of *Aix*, *to reconnoitre from thence, whe-* "*ther they could find out any place near or towards* "Fouras, and alſo *to examine the priſoners*," Enq. p. 25. Sir *John Mordaunt* alſo declares, they did thereupon go to the Iſle of *Aix*, where the priſoners were, and afterwards that the priſoners and other witneſſes were examined that evening.

But the information then obtained not being favourable to *the landing near Fouras*, or *attack of that fort on the land ſide:*

In this ſituation the General thought it neceſſary ſome *immediate determination* ſhould be come to in regard to the landing, and the *Coup de Main*; already too long delayed; he called a Council of

War for that purpoſe, and it ſeems impoſſible, I think, to have come to any other reſolution than they did, informed as they then ſtood, without riſquing the whole of his Majeſty's troops upon an attempt in which there ſcarce ſeemed a *poſſibility* of ſucceſs.

In regard to their *immediate reſolution to go home again*, mentioned p. 36. it is falſe, and has been already confuted.

The only queſtion therefore remaining on this head is, whether after thus giving up the *Coup de Main* or *eſcalade* (which is confeſſed) they therefore gave up, or *laid aſide the great object of the Expedition*, as the board of General Officers declare, or the *only meaſure which made the fort worth taking*, as the author advances, p. 37.

Firſt then, to proſecute the idea of *Fouras*, it appears that on the 26th, which was the day after the Council of War, ſeveral ſchemes were agitated among the Admirals and Generals, and evidence examined, *particularly concerning the ſituation of* Fouras, *Enq.* p. 18. and that, in conſequence hereof, it was again propoſed by General *Conway* to go and reconnoitre the forts of *Fouras*, *l'Eguille*, &c. which was done next morning from the Tower of the fort of *Aix* with a teleſcope. Here, as Sir *John Mordaunt* ſays in his Narrative, " there was ſome difference of opinion in regard " to an attempt upon it." *Enq.* p. 18. General *Conway*, in his Narrative, ſays, " He gave his " opinion for the landing and attack of that fort, " *&c.* but that being in general judged too diffi- " cult, it was dropt." *Enq.* p. 38. Or as Sir *John Mordaunt* ſays: " No final reſolution taken till " the afternoon, when a propoſal was made to land " at *Chatelaillon*, and make a ſudden attack upon " *Fouras*, and the other forts leading to and upon " the

" the mouth of the river *Charente, with the land* " *forces.*" Enq. p. 18.

This propoſition was by Sir *John Mordaunt* referred to a general Council of War, and there (as appears by that Council) unanimouſly reſolved upon. " But this, ſays the author, was done *for* " *the ſake of employing the ſoldiers*, without in- " tending to draw any other utility from it. p. 56. And afterwards, " That the riſque (of the re- " treat) which was magnified when it was to juſti- " fy the Generals in the non-obedience of their " orders, ſunk to nothing," *when the only conſideration was, whether it would not be ſafer for them to do ſomething that might allay the national clamour againſt them.*

But how does this appear? I do not think the words alluded to in Sir *John Mordaunt's* Letter, *Enq.* p. 109. authoriſe ſuch a concluſion, and therefore muſt agree with the author of the candid reflexions, that nothing but *a zeal to carry on the enterprize*, and *a perſeverance in* the proſecution of it, could have been the foundation of thoſe propoſitions. Nor is it true, *that the ſame riſque was run in regard to the retreat*; as the knowledge now obtained of the weakneſs of *Fouras* on the land ſide, and the ſituation of that fort, in ſtill water, made it in a good meaſure ſecure; at leaſt greatly diminiſhed the riſque; nor was that operation confined to the attacking one inſignificant fort, or to the paltry view of *allaying clamour*, as is aſſerted, but by taking the forts that guard the river, and thereby poſſeſſing the channel quite up to *Rochefort*, was meant as a ſolid method really *to force by a vigorous impreſſion, and not to ſteal into the place:* As would have been ſhewn, had the board thought proper to enquire into the nature of that propoſition, which was the ſubject of the ſecond Council

of War from the General Officer (of no leſs rank than the ſecond in command) who, in his Narrative, ſays he made it, *Enq.* p. 38.—This at leaſt I have heard from hands, and, in a manner, not to doubt of it. I will go a ſtep farther and declare, that if any thing except our *favourite* but *fooliſh Coup de Main* will be allowed to be the *great object of the enterprize*, if the taking the town, or deſtroying the magazines, have any title to be called ſo, that *object* would have been more ſolidly and ſenſibly purſued by the attack of the forts on the 27th or 28th, than by the hopeleſs landing for the eſcalade alone on the 25th or 26th, when that landing would probably have been made.

As by taking theſe forts, the army would be maſters of the river navigable quite up to *Rochefort*, and might then either bring up frigates, or at leaſt any quantity of artillery, ſtores, *&c.* they pleaſed from the fleet, might raiſe batteries on each ſide the water, and, if they could not take the town (of which they would have had a much better chance this way) might at leaſt have had ſome hopes of deſtroying the magazines, *&c.*

Such was the nature of this plan; nor could it indeed be otherwiſe, the idea of attacking the forts on the river, without any farther view, being too ſenſeleſs for any Child, much more any Officer of rank in the army to propoſe, and much too ridiculous for *eight* gentlemen of character and experience in the ſervice to come into. What was the propoſition as ſtated in that Council of War? *To take the forts leading to and upon the mouth of the river* Charente; and what then? why then, ſays the author, turn about and go home; *the Generals would not riſque their army from* Fouras. Though in poſſeſſion of the forts that guard the river, and conſequently of the river (for thoſe higher up were deſcribed

deſcribed either as very weak forts, or little more than batteries to the water) and though no army oppoſed them, yet their determination, he believes, was to finiſh there and to go home! Which would be juſt ſuch an operation as to **ſtorm** the outworks of a town without any view to taking the place; in ſhort, it is ſuch an idea as I have no patience to reaſon about; nor have I faith enough to believe that any of our Generals could either make or come into ſo trifling and ridiculous a project.

There were alſo other ſchemes agitated among the Generals and Admirals, in which *the great object* was not forgot; particularly that mentioned in General *Conway's* Narrative, "For attacking the caſtle of *Oleron*, and paſſing from "thence to the Continent between *Brouage* and "the *Charente*, which is about a league, and from "thence not more than two leagues to *Rochefort*; "and as no attempt was probably expected on "that ſide, we might poſſibly ſucceed ſo far as to "deſtroy ſome of the ſhips or magazines." *Enq.* p. 38. For both the magazines and town lay quite open to the river on that ſide, without either rampart or batteries to defend them; as Colonel *Clerke's* Letter ſhews, *Enq.* p. 66.—I have heard that this ſcheme went ſo far, that an order was actually ſigned for putting it in execution: however, I don't mean to diſpute the grounds upon which it was laid aſide, I make no doubt they were very good; what I propoſed to ſhew **was**, that the General Officers did neither *immediately reſolve to go home*, nor to give up *the great object of the Expedition*, as the author aſſerts, but did **by** every means ſtudy to make the moſt of the plan; and that after the vain hopes of a *ſurprize* and *an eſcalade* (upon which it proceeded) were *reaſonably laid aſide* as an operation quite ſenſeleſs after ſo long an alarm, the

great

great object of the Expedition was not therefore laid aſide.

But as the proſpect in theſe attempts was great on one hand, the difficulties were judged great on the other, and by ſome thought quite inſuperable; as, being furniſhed with no plans of thoſe forts, the intelligence obtained in regard to them not being thoroughly to be depended upon, and the enemy having by ſo long an alarm had time to aſſemble their troops, an operation of this ſort muſt be very hopeleſs at beſt, if not quite impracticable.

Yet while any even the ſmalleſt proſpect of ſucceſs remained, it was thought an attempt of this ſort was juſtifiable, as the retreat would now be ſecured, and it might then be ſeen what farther could be done.

Such it is to be ſuppoſed were the ideas and intentions of the ſuperior Officers in both ſervices when they entered into the propoſal made at the ſecond Council of War; they could not indeed be otherwiſe, as the thing was ſelf-evident; though their opinions of, or hopes from that operation, probably varied according to their different judgment of things.

What muſt be confeſſed is, that thoſe in the Council of War, who had leaſt opinion of thoſe operations, and leaſt hopes of ſucceſs from them, ſhewed by their readineſs to concur in what was propoſed, at leaſt equal zeal and inclination to carry the ſervice intended into execution.—They could not have the ſame reaſon for perſevering in them. Which naturally enough accounts for what the author is, or pretends to be ſo much ſurprized at, *viz.* "That being prevented from landing on the "28th, they ſhould not (according to the author's "phraſe) *think it worth while to detain the fleet a "day*, &c." He is to be ſure aware, that it was

not

not for *one day only* the fleet was to be detained; that the operation was now become very critical; that, as Sir *John Mordaunt* declares in his Narrative, "It was imagined the fleet was to be employed in more conſiderable ſervices after this "Expedition was over;" and that the time for its return had been very ſtrictly limited in his Majeſty's inſtructions. In this ſituation, ſince it was not thought proper to hold a General Council of War (Vid. Court Martial, p. 114.) it will not ſeem extraordinary, that thoſe Land-officers of the Council of War, who had no great opinion of this operation at firſt, did not think it expedient to proſecute it any farther; nor that the General Officer, not firſt in command, who had made the propoſal, rather choſe to acquieſce in the opinion of the Commander in Chief and the other Officers of the Council of War, ſo formed as appears, than take the whole on himſelf in ſo delicate a ſituation againſt that general opinion; as he declares, *Enq.* p. 39. Nor do I think there is room for either cenſure or aſtoniſhment, or for the ridicule attempted by our author, in any part of this proceeding.

This, I think, is a fair and true ſtate of our late unfortunate Expedition from its firſt riſe to its final diſappointment. But I hope while the reader reflects coolly on this, he will alſo remember this was not our firſt Expedition to the coaſts of *France*. It would have been the *firſt ſucceſsful one* among all our modern attempts, had it proved ſo.

Sir *Stafford Fairborne* ſailed 1706, with a large armament to the ſame place, and with the ſame ſucceſs.

The Duke of *Buckingham* was baffled before a ſmall fortreſs in the Iſle of *Rhé*.

And

And General *Talmaſh's* merit, in knowingly ſacrificing himſelf and ſome hundred men to his unjuſtifiable vanity, is now for the firſt time diſcovered and applauded; his ſucceſs was like the former.

Nor was that of our neighbours better than our own; Admiral *Tromp*, with ſixty ſhips of the line, and 10,000 land-forces, ſailed 1674 to this very coaſt, and was not diſgraced for returning even *without an attempt*, nor reckoned either a coward, a fool, or a traitor.

I don't mention all our idle parades on the coaſts of *France*, nor our fooliſh, ill-calculated bombardments of towns; whoſe damages would have been more than repaid by the expence of our preparations; nor do I mean from theſe to conclude that *France* is *invulnerable*; nor even that the attempt on *Rochefort* was impracticable. Nothing is more dangerous than arguing from precedents, eſpecially in military caſes, of which ſcarce two are alike; though I think they are as good proofs againſt the attempt, as the taking of *Bergen-op-zoom* and *St. Philip's* are in its favour; what I propoſe in mentioning the failure of our former Expeditions, is not to prejudice, but to take off prejudices.

I mean to leſſen the violence of our diſappointment, and to ſoften the ſharpneſs of the unjuſt and unneceſſary ſuſpicions, propagated on this occaſion, by the examples of both great and brave men, who have either failed in attempts of this kind, or not judged it expedient to make them on grounds perhaps much lighter and leſs concluſive than what weighed in the Council of War on the 25th *September*.

In a Council of War held on board the *Breda*, Admiral *Ruſſel's* ſhip, 1692, it was agreed, "Not

"to

" to attempt *St. Maloe's*, *as the troops could do no* " *ſervice without the aſſiſtance of the ſhips.*"

Not to attempt *Breſt*, " For fear they ſhould be " wind-bound on the coaſt; and becauſe the " Land-officers declared, *they could do nothing* " *without the protection of the fleet.*"

Alſo not to attack *Rochefort*, " The ſeaſon be- " ing ſo far ſpent, and the place lying ſo deep in " the Bay." This, I think, was on the 28th *July*.

Yet on this Council appear the moſt reſpectable names both in the land and ſea-ſervice; Admiral *Ruſſel*, Sir *Ralph Delaval*, Sir *George Rooke*, Sir *Cloud. Shovel.*—The Duke of *Leinſter*, the Earl of *Galway*, the Earl of *Argyle*, &c.

On the *Cadiz* Expedition 1702, under the Duke of *Ormond* and Sir *George Rooke*; the reaſons that chiefly weighed againſt attacking the Iſle of *Cadiz* were, " That from ſome intelligence received " from Mr. *Methuen*, &c. and from *the concurrent* " *teſtimony of fiſhermen taken on the coaſt*, it ap- " peared that the enemy had about 4,000 diſ- " ciplined troops, and 1,000 horſe, *&c.* that the " fleet could give *no other aſſiſtance than covering* " *the landing, and that it would be impoſſible to ſup-* " *ply the troops from the fleet in blowing weather.*" From theſe circumſtances the attempt was judged *impracticable*, though the Duke of *Ormond* had 13,500 land-forces, with battering cannon, and did not *depend on a Coup de Main.*

It is true, Sir *George Rooke* was blamed for his conduct in this Expedition, but as true that it was *from the malice of his enemies*; that no matter was found againſt him on an Enquiry; that all foreign hiſtorians, as well as our own (except Biſhop *Burnet*, who takes every occaſion to cenſure him with too apparent a prejudice) have conſtantly juſtified him; and that he received the thanks of the Houſe of

Commons for his great ſervices done the nation in the courſe of that very Expedition.

I have thus gone through my tedious, troubleſome taſk; which I heartily wiſh, not for my own, but the ſake of thoſe concerned, may be read with the ſame candor I have writ it. It has no ſallies of wit to engage, no bold ſtrokes of invective to awaken, none of ridicule to amuſe; it is what it profeſſed to be, an argument, not a declamation. I have confined myſelf in the dull, humble path of mere defence; I have diſſented with candor where I might have blamed; I have even praiſed where it was the intereſt of my cauſe to condemn: though I could have worked up the piece with other colours; I might have arraigned, as well as vindicated; I might have declamed; I might have ridiculed: But the charms of truth are greater with me than thoſe of vanity; I write to convince, not to pleaſe; I deſpiſe pamphleteering, and the dirty, ungenerous war of words; and I abhor that baneful ſpirit of party, which ſo ſhamefully mixes its poiſon in all the tranſactions of this unhappy iſland.

I ſigh as the author does for the calamities of this country; I lament our paſt diſgraces; I look with horror on thoſe too probably reſerved for us.

Diſappointed in our perhaps too ſanguine expectations here; outwitted in *America*, and overpowered in *Germany*; at home, abroad, at land, at ſea, our proſpect is every where unpleaſant.

Yet becauſe we are diſappointed, let us not be unjuſt; to preach candor to men immerſed in party is preaching to the winds; but juſtice founded in plain facts, and plain reaſon, may perhaps find its way to their hearts through all the prejudices with which they are guarded.

I lament as the author does; I mourn over the long liſt of our General Officers thus condemned

as

as it seems to insignificance and inactivity. If they are really what *of late they have been represented* to be, I must think them a disgrace and a burthen to their country; if while *the men are brave, there are no commanders to lead them on*; and if they are either unwilling or unworthy to be employed in her most essential services, while boys are called forth from the rank of Colonels and Lieutenant-Colonels to head her armies, and have commands on which almost the being of this country depends.

Where indeed, as the author says, *where is the glory of the* British *Name!* if this be so. I should not have ventured to draw the picture the author has drawn; I thought them *able*, and sure they are *willing* to serve their country!

Or if this be the melancholy truth, as he insinuates, let him remember there is one blame at least not theirs who went on this fatal Expedition; they are not censured for *declining*, they are blamed for *accepting* of command, or not sufficiently remonstrating against a plan they did not approve; yet they *made their objections*, they *stated their doubts*, and *then submitted to their orders*, as became them: it is a delicate thing for Officers *to remonstrate too strongly against services they are ordered upon!*

But amidst all our author's lamentations on the military state of this country, does he think he shall mend it by making desperate, and thrusting out of the service, men, who on his own principles, I think, have no blame, but that of not having judged *practicable* a thing he thought so, or perhaps not judged it practicable *in the particular mode he most approved.* He does not seem to think they want spirit; he does not quite arraign their capacity; and sure the idea of their treachery is too ridiculous to deserve a second mention; men, as he himself says (and his is an honourable testimony) who

will

will be acquitted of perſonal cowardice by whoever is acquainted with their characters; who have ſerved with ſpirit and gallantry, and who lately ſtood among the firſt for rank and reputation.

POSTSCRIPT.

I MUST add one obſervation, which I omitted, on the ſeveral quotations made, from the *Enquiry*, of words ſpoke by the General Officers, or anſwers made by them, before that board; *viz.* That thoſe anſwers were not accurately taken down, as was obſerved by many who were preſent; were not regularly read over when taken; and are ſcarce ever in the words they were ſpoke; which is very material, when words are ſo critically weighed and ſo invidiouſly commented upon. I muſt at the ſame time do the Judge Advocate the juſtice to ſay, I believe it did not proceed from the leaſt want of candor in him; and that it was quite otherwiſe at the Court Martial, where he alſo officiated, and where every thing ſeemed to be taken down with the utmoſt exactneſs.

FINIS.